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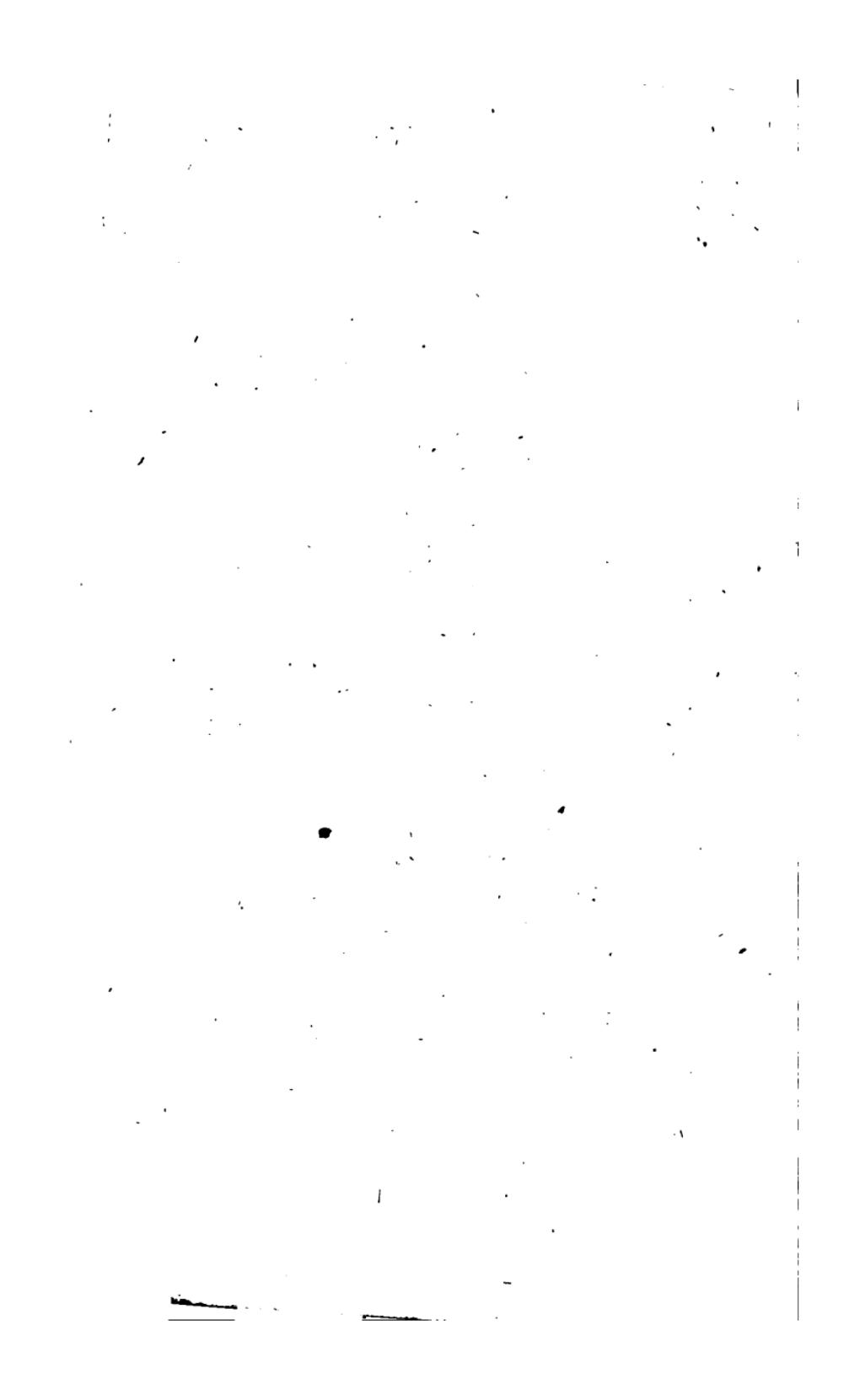
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THE
SECLUDED MAN;
OR, THE
HISTORY OF MR. OLIVER.

→→←←

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY
THE REV. MR. HOLDER,
(Cantilena Captivitatis.)

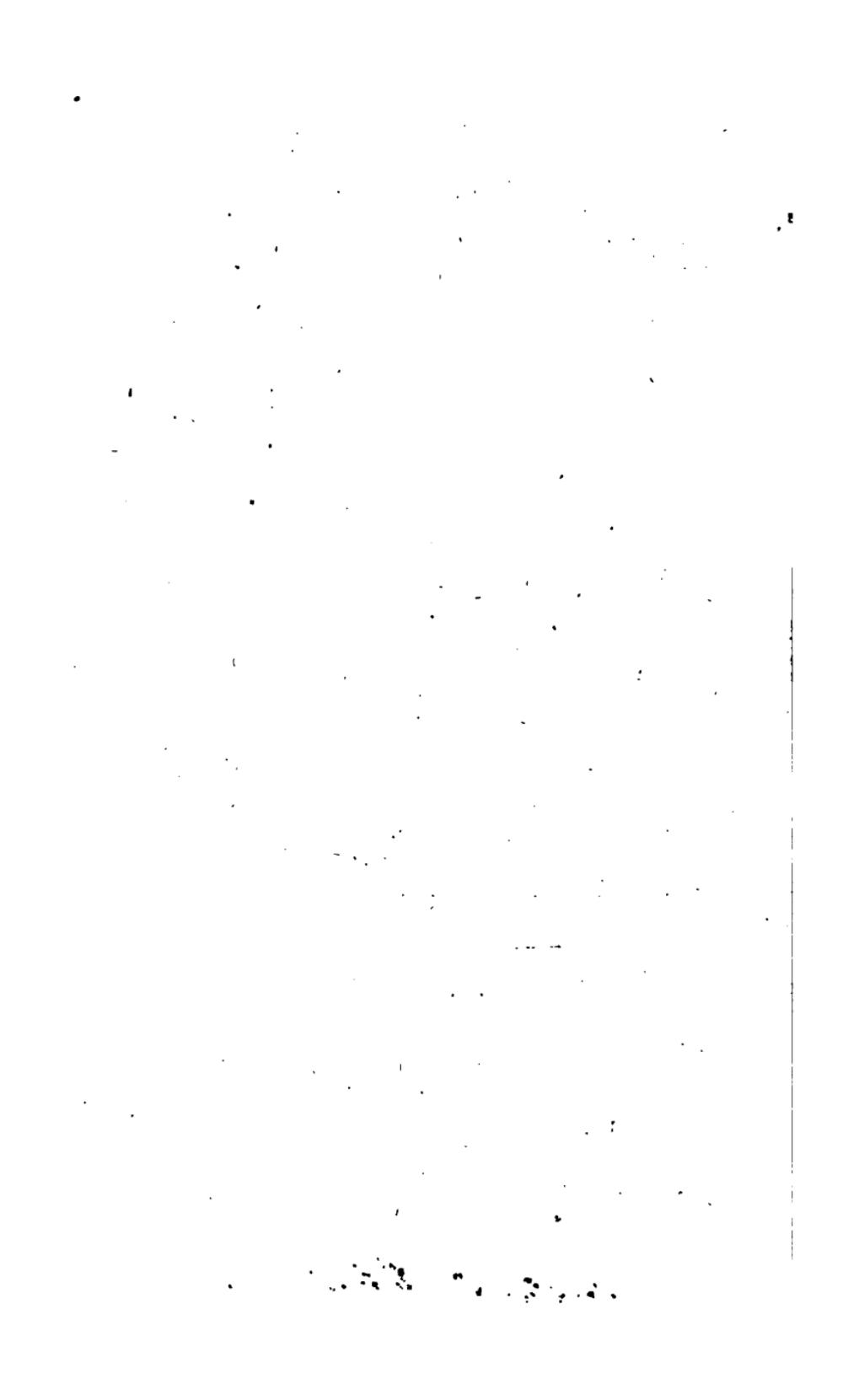
“Uti conviva satur.” MOR.
“Inveni portum; Spes et Fortuna, valete!
“Sat me lufitis; ludite nunc alios!”

VOL. II.

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THE SECLUDED MAN.

CHAP. I.

Mr. Oliver reviews his visit to Mr. Selby.

MR. Oliver having made use of these persuasive arguments, and raised these delightful images, to convince and to influence the mind of his friend, Mrs. Audley, she found them so consonant with her own sentiments and inclinations, that the natural candour of her disposition rendered it impossible for her to

refrain from expressing a complete and decided assent to Mr. Selby's proposals.—Yet still timid and cautious, lest she should incur any blame for too great a promptitude, she could not help adding—“ I look upon you, dear Sir, as a real and prudent friend. If you discover any impropriety in the message which I have entrusted you to deliver to Mr. Selby, let me intreat you to qualify, or alter, or suppress it, as you think best. I am bewildered in uncertainty, while I have no wish but to think, and act, and speak, consistently and with propriety.”

“ *Divest yourself, my dear Madam,*” said Mr. Oliver, “ of these distractions of mind. You have delivered nothing in your message which the most scrupulous and censorious would blame, or require to be unsaid. Confide in my watchful attention to your best interests ; and as I know my friend's great anxiety to hear the result of the commission which he put into my hands, I mean to return to him before dinner, and it will depend upon

upon circumstances whether I shall be at home this evening or not."

He then rose from his seat, and bid the good lady adieu, without farther delay.—A more accelerated pace, than that at which he usually walked, brought him to Selby House in five and thirty minutes. His prompt return was highly grateful to its worthy owner, who, scarcely giving himself time to renew his accustomed welcome, (although, without it, his friend might have read it in his eyes, and felt it in the cordial pressure of his hand) he began with saying—“ Well, my kind friend and ambassador, what is the result of your negociation ?”

“ Every thing,” said Mr. Oliver, “ that you yourself can wish, Sir!—Mrs. Audley upon this, as upon every other occasion, is truly herself.—The moderation which enabled her to bear adversity with consistent resignation, preserved her mind in its own equilibrium, when your splendid offers bring to her view the prospect of again tasting

the sweets of prosperity. She acknowledges your worth ; confesses herself not to be insensible of its value, when allied to her own virtues ; and she accepts the proposal with that dignity and propriety of consent, which convince that she deserves the good fortune which you directed me to announce to her."

"I presume, then," said Mr. Selby, "that I may venture to wait upon her myself to-morrow. At present we must think of our dinner, as it cannot be very early ; and my appetite reminds me that the usual hour for our repast is nearly approaching."

He then rang the bell, and was informed that his conjectures were true. Accordingly the dinner was soon announced, and the friends proceeded to partake of it. When they had finished, and the servants had withdrawn, Mr. Selby resumed the topic, which seemed so fully to occupy his mind :—"I shall conclude this business," said he, "as soon and as privately as possible ; and when it is finished, I have been laying a plan of as

happy

happy and compact a household as any in the three kingdoms. Selby House must undoubtedly be the head-quarters of our little party. I shall insist upon Mr. Falcon and yourself taking up your abode with us. It was a settled point long ago, that *you* should be an inmate here ; and Mr. Falcon, besides being to be invested with the office of chaplain, will, I hope, soon be raised to the relationship of *son-in-law*. Nothing will be wanted to complete our circle but the recovery of his Arabella : or if you, my dear friend," said he, " can point out any *person*, or *thing*, which will add to your particular enjoyment and satisfaction, *that* person, and *that* thing shall be pre-eminently welcome to me and mine."

Some moments elapsed before Mr. Oliver could answer : his friend's kindness was too superabundant for his feelings to be suppressed or concealed.—Nature and sentiment overflowed at his eyes, and, for a little interval, precluded his utterance.

" No, my dear Mr. Selby, I have nothing now to increase my comforts!—In my case the Roman wish of execration has been realized in its fullest extent :—

" ————— *Ultimus suorum moriatur.*"

And all that I now desire, on this side eternity, is to *live in peace*, and to *die quietly*.—I am the man that has seen affliction," continued he, " and that the bitterness and austerity of my griefs should be melted down to pensive melancholy, is the sum of my wishes—the *Canaan* of my hopes, after passing through the *wilderness* of woe in which I have been wandering! And where, indeed, can I find the accomplishment of my desire so full and so ready as in your family? Already have I found in your society a charm which has lulled my mind to a degree of tranquillity which I had thought impossible."

Mr. Selby found that the conversation had, unluckily, taken a turn not so pleasing to his friend; therefore stopped it, and said—

" I am

" I am looking, with some impatience, for an answer to my letter, to my correspondent at Hamburgh. A few days must bring it, if he wrote immediately, and the winds were propitious: how pleasing would it be to me, to commence my assiduities to Mrs. Audley, with a satisfactory communication from him!"

CHAP. II.

The reader still among his old acquaintance.

THE conversation seemed to be a little at a stand, when the servant entered, and introduced Mr. Falcon. He was about to apologize for his unreasonable intrusion, but Mr. Selby stopped him, with an assurance that his presence was always an acquisition to the society which he indulged with it. Mr. Falcon informed him, that the immediate object of his visit was, to let him know that
the

the incumbent of the parish, in which they lived, was dead ; and that if Mr. Selby's interest could improve his cure into a vicarage, by obtaining him the vacant presentation, he should be greatly obliged to him.—“ It does not exceed,” said he, “ 150l. per annum ; but this will be a comfortable exchange for the 45l. for which I have been discharging the duties of the parish as the curate.”

“ I have,” said Mr. Selby, “ anticipated your wishes, before you signified them to me. Knowing that the incumbent was declining, I solicited, and obtained the promise of the patron in your favour, without your knowledge. And now that you have learned that he is actually dead, you have only to repair to the gentleman, in whose gift it is, with a letter, which I will prepare for you ; and you will find that I have been very fortunate in my mediation. I will immediately write ; and while I retire to my

study for the purpose, our friend Mr. Oliver will, over a glass of wine, inform you of the future arrangements of our family. Short as our separation has been, something new and unexpected has been introduced on the carpet."

So saying, without giving Mr. Falcon time to thank him for his friendly forethought, or to express his curiosity concerning the intelligence which he was to learn, he hastily betook himself to the benevolent labours of his pen.

"What," said Mr. Falcon to Mr. Oliver, "can our noble and generous friend allude to?—Have you heard any thing of my dear Arabella?"

"Not as yet," resumed Mr. Oliver; "but you will be pleasingly surprised, when I tell you that Mr. Selby has proposed a matrimonial union with Mrs. Audley; that

I have communicated it to her, at his desire, and have brought back her assent to him, in the short interval of time which has passed since our meeting at the cottage."

"The Grecian poet," said Mr. Falcon, talks to us of Επεια πλεοντα; but these are Εργα πλεοντα καὶ θαυματα."

"Events have, indeed," replied Mr. Oliver, "been *on the wing*, and produced *wonders*, which we little expected. When we conversed about the liberality which Mrs. Audley would experience from Mr. Selby, we scarcely imagined that he would give her *himself*.—And yet, after all, there can scarcely exist in the world two persons so calculated to make each other happy, as our friends, of whom we are speaking. They are both convinced of it, and are wisely determined to be so, by mutual endeavour.—Mr. Selby, whose comprehensive benevolence always endeavours to comprise as

many objects as possible within its circle, projects to form one family of our little party. He considers you as one of his household, of course anticipating your future relationship by the recovery of the young lady ; and he has most obligingly reminded me that, on my week's visit to this place, he had planned that I should become one of its inmates. His mind is fixed upon the arrangement, and we shall hardly object to what will so materially contribute to our mutual comfort.”

Mr. Selby at this moment entered ; and Mr. Falcon, on receiving the letter from his hands, seized that opportunity of warmly thanking him for its contents, and congratulating him on the intelligence communicated to him by Mr. Oliver.

“ No one, my dear Sir,” said Mr. Selby, “ could so properly report the matter to you,

as the person by whose means it was accomplished."

" Do me however the justice," replied Mr. Oliver, " to confess that the proposition came from yourself. I do not pretend to so much penetration, as to assert that I even *suspected* your intentions. In affairs of the heart, the anticipation of *third* persons is very seldom *successful*; and, in *my* humble opinion, it is always *impertinent*. Unbidden affection is that alone which is likely to be sincere, strong, and permanent. In the present case, nothing is wanting to render that, which you feel and profess for Mrs. Audley, perfect in each and all of these qualifications: and I am equally convinced that if her *heart* was not really concerned in accepting it, she would never be swayed by *her interest* to give you the *semblance* of a return."

Mr. Falcon now interrupted the conversation by taking his leave; saying, that he should

should set out with the letter in the morning; and Mr. Oliver having agreed to remain at Selby House that night, Mr. Selby and himself seated themselves down to social converse for the rest of the evening.

CHAP. III.

Mr. Selby again at the Cottage.

BEFORE our friends parted for the night, Mr. Oliver informed Mr. Selby, that he should leave him early in the morning, and return home to breakfast. "I shall then," said he, "have it in my power to apprise Mrs. Audley of your intention of calling at the cottage, and she will be prepared to receive you."

Mr.

Mr. Selby assented to the proposal, and Mr. Oliver accordingly put it in execution when he arose. He found Mrs. Audley's breakfast just ready, and the good lady expecting his return, concluding it would be early, as he had not come home on the evening before. He informed her that she would probably see Mr. Selby in the course of the forenoon; and having recounted to her the substance of the conversation at Selby House, he then, in order to prevent her mind from being too much agitated with a subject of such interest, passed on to the cause of Mr. Falcon's journey, which he was, as this morning, to undertake.

"This accession to his good fortune," said he, "will be a pleasing circumstance when he comes to be united to his dear Arabella; as, however generous Mr. Selby would undoubtedly be towards them, it would still be a gratification to a liberal mind

mind like his, to have something of his own to offer to her participation."

Mrs. Audley now took occasion to enquire whether Mr. Selby had heard any thing farther from Hamburg. He answered her in the negative; and observed that his friend was particularly anxious to recommend himself to her good graces, by being instrumental in the restoration of her daughter; and that he seemed to build very strong expectations upon the answer which he should receive to his letter.

Mrs. Audley now begged to retire for a short time, to make some little regulations in her dress, for the reception of Mr. Selby. And Mr. Oliver, who had always amusement and occupation with his plants, availed himself of this constant resource, while he remained at home in expectation of his friend.

The

The autumn was now so far advanced, that the external objects of his care were getting fast into that torpid state which the suspension of vegetation produces in the generality of plants exposed to the inclemency of the weather. His attention was therefore principally engrossed by the few favourites whose privilege it was to be sheltered from the external blast, to be cherished by the warmth of his room, and to catch the influence of the transient sun-beam through the glass of his window. As these were few in number, they were choice in their kind, and had every advantage which they could derive from care and cultivation; and he beheld them now with additional pleasure, as he should remove them with him to Selby House, and procure for them a favourable situation in the hot-house and green-house, as their natures might but require exclusion from air, or the addition of factitious heat. While these sentiments, arising from the constancy and affectionate temper of his disposition,

position, were amusing and engrossing his mind, the minutes passed away imperceptibly, and he was interrupted from his pursuits by hearing the voice of his friend, Mr. Selby, below. He, at the same time, found by listening for a moment, that Mrs. Audley had been in the way to receive him ; and judging that it might, perhaps, be more agreeable to them both to dispense with his company for half an hour, he finished his horticultural labour, and then took up a book to pass away the time during which it might be proper for him to be absent. As it was not likely to be long, he took up Gray's Poems, to which he was particularly attached, and fixed upon his *Ode to Adversity*, abounding with ideas of a cast most exactly accommodated to the feelings he was in the habit of indulging, since he had considered them as appropriated to his own case. He re-perused it on the present occasion with the avidity of an admiration which had been long engrailed upon his mind ; and, having finished it,

it, he cast his eyes over some lines written by him, in pencil, at the bottom, which were part of a poem composed by himself in happier days, and contained an address to the *Pensive Muse*, which he had thought applicable to the sensation of pleasure he felt on reading that ode of Gray, so striking a production of her inspiration :—

—“ Ne'er, when her rage Disaster spends
In heaviest ills ; bereft of friends,
May I love thee ! for then the mourner's ear
Loves thy solemn voice to hear ;
That whispers to the soul relief,
Or sweetly talks away its grief ! ”

The occurrence of these lines, recalling to him the period when they had flowed from his pen, and depicted a state of dereliction which he then knew only in imaginary idea ; but at the time of his scribbling them in Gray's Poems (which was previous to his knowledge of Mr. Selby and soon after his return

return to the cottage) seemed to be peculiarly his own; this occurrence, we would say, produced so powerful an effect upon his mind, that he could not refrain from tears; and he was scarcely recovering from this paroxysm of involuntary grief, when the voice of Mrs. Audley, gently calling to him at the door, reminded him that his friend would be wishful to see him below stairs.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Cottage Scene continues.

WHEN Mr. Oliver descended to meet Mr. Selby, his friend intimated to him, in a few words which he delivered aside, that his conversation with Mrs. Audley had been highly satisfactory; and Mr. Oliver himself perceived that her countenance was relieved from that embarrassment which clouded it when she had been expecting Mr. Selby's visit. Under the persuasion, therefore, that he might advert to their mutual situation without giving her pain, he assumed the conversation by saying, "that no conjecture could be so highly gratifying to his feelings
as

as the present, when he beheld two persons, whom he valued in the highest degree of estimation, agreed upon a point which could not fail to increase their reciprocal happiness; and, under this conviction, he could not refrain from offering them his warmest and sincerest congratulations."

Mr. Selby replied, "that he thanked him very cordially for his part of the friendly concern which he testified in his welfare; and since," continued he, "you are the confidential friend of both of us, I may venture to repeat to you what I have been saying to Mrs. Audley—that in our respective situations there could be no necessity to protract the completion of our intentions. I am extremely anxious to see her in a different station of life from her present, removed from this cottage to Selby House: and as delicacy prevents such a change until she has bestowed on me her hand, my good wishes towards her are obstructed by a delay for which no good reason can be assigned."

Mrs.

Mrs. Audley did not immediately reply, but, after a short pause, she acquired sufficient confidence to trust herself to speak, and she said, "that it was from motives of delicacy that she objected to Mr. Selby's ideas on the subject; and as she had lived three years in the obscurity of the cottage without blame or reproach, she should be very sorry, just on quitting it, to afford any room for the tongue of calumny to busy itself about her."

Mr. Oliver then interrupted her, and said, "that whatever delays were interposed, the meddling part of the neighbourhood would talk of the change which had taken place in her and Mr. Selby's families; but this could not be of the least consequence to either. What more then can they do, if the interval be shortened, and an affair, founded on so proper and consistent a basis, should be brought to a conclusion with all convenient expedition?"

He

He was, of course, very strongly seconded by Mr. Selby ; and, after that, Mrs. Audley made one or two more objections, which they easily found means to over-rule. She was fain to accede to the determination, that the marriage should be concluded in *the latter end of the succeeding week*, and that no one should be present but Mr. Falcon, Mr. Selby's house-keeper, and themselves, Mr. Oliver being invested with the office of giving Mrs. Audley's hand to Mr. Selby.

This important arrangement being made, which had taken up some time, Mr. Selby took his leave, having requested the favour of Mr. Oliver's company home ; to which he immediately acceded, and they departed.

Various were the reflections which arose in Mrs. Audley's mind on being left to herself, in consequence of the change which was soon to take place in her condition. Although she felt a little shocked at the *sudden-*

ness of the event, yet she acknowledged to herself that there was such a disparity in her situation and that of Mr. Selby, that the intermediate intercourse of visits would be extremely awkward and inconvenient to both parties ; and this would be especially the case with herself, as she was the only female in the little circle. This reflection recalled her daughter's absence to her mind with redoubled anguish and regret for her loss ; and from this subject of sorrow, the association of ideas caused her thoughts rapidly to cast a retrospective glance to those days when the father of that daughter was living, and she was happily united to them both. The storm which arose within was extremely violent. The collision of these several causes of agitation produced very terrible effects ; but, happily, they soon subsided from the natural gentleness of Mrs. Audley's temper and constitution.

“ Let me not,” said she to herself, “ embitter the present prospect of happiness by looking

looking back on that which is lost, never to be recalled! With respect to my daughter, it is not unreasonable to hope that I may be yet joined to her again in happy society. The step I am about to take is much more likely to promote than to preclude that event. Why then should I not meet the dispensations of Providence with that cheerful gratitude which the happy reverse of fortune he has bestowed upon me, most undeniably demands? When he has prepared a table for me in the wilderness, why should I not partake of the benefit, and bless the hand which has so liberally provided for me?"

CHAP. V.

The Reader is requested to join Messrs. Selby and Oliver.

MR. Selby and Mr. Oliver in the meanwhile pursued their walk to Selby House. The day was gloomy and bleak, with some drizzling rain, which occasioned them to make as much haste as they could; and of course prevented much conversation by the way. Having arrived, a comfortable fire soon repaired the temporary inconvenience which they had suffered; and the news that dinner

dinner was at hand, was not unwelcome to them when their appetites were sharpened by the keenness of the air and the exercise they had been taking. After dinner, their usual time for confidential conversation, Mr. Selby thought it was now a fit season to speak to his friend on the subject which had caused him to solicit his company home.

" In every emergency, my dear friend," said he, " I find myself naturally led to have recourse to you. I first wish to have the sanction of your opinion how to act; and when I have received your instructions, I require your assistance to put them into execution. I am certain that our friend Mrs. Audley must require some pecuniary aid to prepare for her removal here. Neither she nor myself could bear that she should appear otherwise than would become the mistress of the house she was to inhabit. Yet still it is a delicate subject for me to name to her, and I feel it to be quite an impossible thing for

me to offer what may be necessary on such an occasion. Will you then gratify me so far as to use a little innocent deception, and tell her that *you* have received a sum of money which you can spare, and proffer to her the loan of 100l. in five 20l. notes for the convenience of her disposing of them, observing to her that you will be repaid by her when she is instated in that ease of circumstances which will of course follow her union with myself?"

"I enter entirely," said Mr. Oliver, "into the delicacy of your mode of supplying her unavoidable exigences on the present occasion, and I will, Sir, most cheerfully put in execution the little scheme you have suggested. It is more than probable that she will suspect the source of my riches, but I will do my utmost to prevent her knowing it. It is rather unfair in me, however, to assume a meritorious action to myself, to which I have no claim; however as I reserve to

to myself the privilege of undeceiving her, when she will think of repaying me, my injustice will be only for a time, and will be fully atoned for by the candour of the confession I shall then make."

" This point is then determined on," said Mr. Selby; " and to prevent mistakes from my forgetfulness, here is the loan adjusted as I suggested to you, and do not at any rate suffer her to return part of it, as I should wish her to furnish herself with every thing she can want in the greatest plenty. Servants are very much guided by appearances, and I should be sorry that any of mine should be misled by exterior circumstances to act so as to incur my displeasure, and forfeit their places, which they have long held with comfort to themselves and with my fullest approbation. I shall take an early opportunity of informing them of my intentions, and giving them the necessary directions for preparing the house for the reception of its new inhabitants.

bitants. I have already, in my own mind, allotted your bed-room and study; and our friend Falcon will have the *second* arrangement of similar apartments."

Mr. Oliver bowed, in acknowledgment of his friend's kind and partial attention to his convenience and comfort, and observed, "that he had ever found, since he had *bad* the pleasure of knowing him, that no busines of his own, no cares, however they occupied his mind, ever prevented him from attending to the smallest minutiae which concerned the interests of a friend. Were a man," continued he, "to define friendship by the exemplar of it which he would gather from reading the state of your mind, and by that pageant which exists in the generality of the world, how totally different would the two descriptions of the same nominal virtue be? As different as true *religion*, with all its heaven-born excellence, and foul *hypocrisy* mimicking its forms without the smallest portion

portion of its essential qualities ! How much am I already obliged by the *real* friendship I have experienced from you in the short period of our acquaintance ! How have I been duped and ruined by those vile *professions* of friendship in the world, which have raised me into the air only to cast me down the precipice of utter and inevitable destruction ! ”

“ Indulge me so far,” replied Mr. Selby, “ as not to recur to painful recollections at a time when I wish to task *your* friendship so far, as to induce you to partake; as largely as you can, in my happiness. I can only say, that you will lay me under a great obligation by so doing. Do you recollect an old Latin poet, quoted by Cicero in his Offices, comparing the pointing out the way to a traveller wandering out of it, to the lighting of another’s candle from one’s own, and observing on this allusion—

“ *Nibilominus ipsi lucet, quamvis illam accenderit?*”

Just so, I can truly assert, that I am never happy unless I can enable those around me to partake of my felicity; and that this diffusion of my good things, like the bestowing of light from one torch to another, communicates the blessing, but never diminishes it to myself in my own estimation."

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Divided between Selby House and the Cottage.

MR. Selby would not suffer Mr. Oliver to think of returning home that night.—“ You must remember,” said he, “ that this is as much your home as the cottage, and will soon be much more so.”

Mr. Oliver felt himself so happy in his friend’s company, that he found no difficulty in complying with his request. The evening

could not fail to pass pleasantly on; and conversation imperceptibly brought on the time of retiring to rest. Before Mr. Selby bade him adieu, he told him, "I will dispense with your company to breakfast; but I bespeak your return to dinner, as I feel the necessity of your society to pass the time until my household is established upon its new principles. I am at present like an unsettled and divided man, and until I can concentrate myself as it were, by uniting that part of me, which is at Selby House, with what sojourns at the cottage, I am ill at ease."

Mr. Oliver replied, "that he was always at his friend's disposal, and would punctually comply with his directions."

Agreeably to the arrangements which they prescribed, he set out betimes in the morning, and took his breakfast at the cottage with Mrs. Audley.

"I am

"I am quite deserted now," said she, "by my guest, with whom I have taken so many quiet repasts in our little cottage."

"I plead guilty to the charge," he replied, "*at present*; I shall soon be an intruder on your hospitality, under another roof; but in no situation can I be more indebted to your faithful and assiduous endeavours to promote my comfort, than I have already been. When I was deserted and forlorn, a stranger in a strange land, I found an asylum with you, afforded with such genuine and unaffected hospitality, that, to the last pang of agonizing nature, I shall remember the obligations I owe you with unspeakable gratitude. It is," added he, "under the consciousness of these obligations that I adventure to intrude upon you so far as to entreat you to accept of this little loan, which may be, just now, of use to you, and is at present lying by me unoccupied.

I am

I am sure that you must have occasion for it ; and I shall expect to be paid when, as mistress of Selby-House, your finances will be infinitely beyond my own."

Saying this, he put the little paper-parcel, which had been committed to him by Mr. Selby, into her hands. Mrs. Audley opened it in silence ; and having counted over the amount of its contents, in some surprise, asked him—" And what, Sir, must I do with all this money ? How can I dispose of *five* twenty pound Bank notes ?"

" Pardon me," said he, " my dear Madam ; a lady's wardrobe will very soon expend them : and I appeal to your own ideas of propriety, whether that of the mistress of Selby-House must not be extremely different from that of the tenant of *this* humble habitation."

" I am

"I am overwhelmed with gratitude, Sir," answered Mrs. Audley, "for your considerate liberality towards me. In this view it will be no difficult matter for me to dispose of your loan, reduced as I have lately been in every respect. But how shall I be sure that you will not have occasion for them, before I am rich enough to reimburse you? Do not suffer your generosity to me to supersede your attention to your own probable wants."

Mr. Oliver blushed at having practised a deception with his friend, although no possible evil could redound to any one from it. Still, however, he felt himself awkward and embarrassed, in the receiving of acknowledgments which he was conscious that he did not deserve. The injunctions, however, of Mr. Selby overcame his scruples for the present; and he promised himself ample compensation for his silence, when the time should come for her to offer to return his pre-

tended loan. He then put her in the way of procuring, from the nearest capital town, what she might have occasion to purchase ; and recommended to her not to be sparing in expence, as something should be sacrificed to appearance, in the change she was about to experience, especially with respect to the inferiors, who belonged to the family of Selby-House, and who were apt to attach a consequence to exteriors which did not rightfully belong to them. She acquiesced in the force of his observations, and availed herself of his directions ; and farther requested him to write one or two letters to tradesmen of his acquaintance at _____, for the several articles, of which she would have occasion. And thus, having completely executed, first the commission of Mr. Selby, and then that of Mrs. Audley, in all the *et ceteras* which she detailed to him, he bade her adieu for the present, and returned to Selby-House, not a little pleased with the success of his ingenious

ingenious address ; although it was, perhaps, the first time in his life that he derived any satisfaction from a deliberate deviation from the precise line of truth and rectitude.

CHAP. VII.

Transactions at Selby-House.

MR. Oliver related to Mr. Selby the result of his endeavours to assist Mrs. Audley, according to the mode which he prescribed, and received from him his acknowledgments for these good offices.

Various are the methods by which we can be obliged by a friend. When we are in the enjoyment of every thing which can be given

given by easy and unembarrassed circumstances, we are out of the reach of substantial favours; but still there is a series of benefits which can be conferred upon us, by those whose pecuniary means are infinitely below our own; and there are none which are so flattering, in the receipt of them, as those which indulge the peculiarities of our temper, and comply with the fancies of our imagination. Of this kind had been the good offices rendered by Mr. Oliver to Mr. Selby, in respect of the supply he had conveyed from him to Mrs. Audley, under pretence of its being an immediate loan from himself; and we may be assured that nothing could, at that particular juncture, have been more grateful to Mr. Selby than the complete success of his friend in that instance. He farther informed him, that he had expedited for her the procuring of those things, which he intended should be purchased by the money; and by this affinity also he felt himself greatly obliged.

In

In the midst of these agreeable occurrences, Mr. Selby's letters, by the post, were brought in to him ; and, among them, he quickly discovered one from his Hamburg correspondent, which he at hastily opened, and eagerly perused its contents. He was not long in communicating them to Mr. Oliver ; by which he learnt that the deceased lady's name was *Belmont*, and that, during her life time, she had been in the habit of writing and receiving letters from a son, to whom she directed, as *John Belmont, Esq.*

— Street, — Square, London.— He observed, in continuation, that there was no doubt that Mr. Selby would receive information concerning the young lady, who left England with his mother ; but whether he had had any communication with her since her return to England, it was impossible that he could tell.

“ Should you, Sir,” he wrote to Mr. Selby, “ be so fortunate as to get any intelligence

telligence of her, you will find her to be an angel, both in form and mind; you must pardon me for saying, that I shall envy you the privilege of conversing with her. Should your generous and liberal spirit be inclined to confer any favours upon her, in order to ameliorate her lot, which I lament is not what her singular worth entitles her to, you will experience in her a disinterested reluctance to be laid under obligations, and a singular independence of nature, which adds dignity even to the poverty to which she has been, no doubt, reduced; as it is impossible that with such sentiments she could have been born in a state of indigence and humiliation."

" All then," said Mr. Selby, " that we can gather from this letter is, that we must seek out Mr. Belmont, and enquire from him every thing he can instruct us in, respecting the young lady who accompanied his mother abroad, and endeavour to obtain
from

from him some information where she is to be met with ; for even the *difference of name* would not induce me to abandon the hope of her being the daughter of Mrs. Audley ; since the same desire of concealment might occasion her to change it, when driven by necessity to live in dependance upon another. My correspondent's account of her gives us reason to believe that she possesses a lofty spirit ; and it is more than probable that the same cause would produce a similar effect in the daughter, as it had done in the case of the mother.”

Mr. Oliver concurred with Mr. Selby in opinion ; and it was agreed upon by them, that the sooner he could address Mr. Belmont, the better.

“ You will, of course, my dear Sir,” said Mr. Oliver, “ so word your applications to him, as to convince him that you are making an enquiry of considerable importance

portance to yourself, or to some one who is dear to you ; and he will be, no doubt, induced to take some pains in giving you as satisfactory an answer as possible."

Mr. Selby immediately repaired to the study, and hastened to indite and dispatch the letter, on which he flattered himself that much depended for the completion of Mrs. Audley's happiness. This being done, the dinner invited them to partake of its refreshment, which being completed, they passed away a pleasing afternoon ; and in the evening Mr. Oliver returned to the cottage, to inform Mrs. Audley of the letter which had been received from Hamburg, and of the steps which Mr. Selby had taken in consequence with Mr. Belmont, in order to improve the intelligence it conveyed to some useful and satisfactory purpose, with regard to her daughter.

CHAP. VIII.

The history goes on for part of two days.

THERE could not be any thing which could more effectually commend Mr. Selby to Mrs. Audley's good graces, than his assiduities in gaining some accounts of her daughter, in order to her final recovery. When that event should take place, it would be evident that she had closed her account with hope on this side the grave ; and gently to linger through the remainder of her life,

life, with *her* and the newly adopted partner of her days, would be all the occupation to which she had to look forward. She enquired very particularly of Mr. Oliver, whether Mr. Selby had any knowledge of the Belmont family; and having learned that he had only heard of the name, she declared her entire ignorance of them; wondering, if her Arabella was indeed the young lady in question, by what means she had obtained admission among them: "Although," she observed, "without sacrificing too largely to maternal vanity, I can venture to assert, that *after* her introduction, her own merits would be a sufficient passport to their esteem and attachment."

Mr. Oliver replied, "That the field of conjecture was so very wide, that one would be lost in attempting to explore all its mazes. Providence, in the protection of its *favourites*, made use of such a variety of secondary causes, that it was impossible to trace

the path by which they were finally led to the happiness intended for them, from their outset on the journey of life. The road might be often perilous, difficult, tiresome, and circuitous : the object might be involved in clouds of darkness, and frequently be entirely lost sight of; but that eye, which never slumbers, and to which "the night is as clear as the day," kept it always in view, and would infallibly guide the wanderer to its possession, in final tranquillity of enjoyment. Those, on the contrary, who were unfortunately excluded from his favour, *by forfeiture or otherwise*, whatever were their prospects, or their abilities, without his preventing and assisting grace, could never attain to the reality of happiness ; and, whatever might be their intermediate success, would come to an **untimely end*.—But I am

* The intelligent and deep-thinking reader may possibly suspect Mr. Oliver of an attachment to a species of *qualified predestination*. On this head we must leave him to his own judgment to decide.

infensibly

insensibly wandering into the wilds of speculation," said he, "when you are not inclined to listen to my reveries. I am rather fatigued with my walk which I have taken to-day, and, with your permission, would wish to go early to bed.

On the morrow, when breakfast was over, and Mr. Oliver was preparing to avail himself of a very fine, though cold day, to take a long walk, a servant came up to the door with some game, as a present to Mrs. Audley from Mr. Selby, and a note to Mr. Oliver, in which he requested him to apologize to Mrs. Audley for not calling on her himself, on account of business which detained him at home for the day; and requesting that he would contrive to come over to Selby-House to a late dinner, with an intention of remaining there all night:— "and, in return, I will," said he in the conclusion of the note, "invite myself, with the permission of Mrs. Audley, to

dine at the cottage *to-morrow*, at her usual hour."

The arrangement could not fail to be pleasing, in every respect, to all parties; and the servant was directed to return with their compliments, and Mr. Oliver's promise to be with him, in due time, on the *present* day, and Mrs. Audley's hope expressed, that she should see Mr. Selby on the morrow.

Every thing being thus adjusted to the general satisfaction, Mr. Oliver pursued his intention of a long walk, which, with a circle of *charitable* visits he designed to pay among the *poor*, who had long been the pensioners on his little purse, would, he knew, occupy the time, until it would be proper to direct his course to the hospitable mansion of his friend. Mrs. Audley (to whom neatness and cleanliness appeared to be, with respect to *exteriors*, what godliness was to

the

the *mind*, since the one, she said, was *purity without*, and the other was *purity within*) immediately, on his departure, began to set every thing in the best order which the nature of the cottage would admit of, against the intended visit of the morrow. Every assiduity of that kind was stimulated and encouraged by the conviction that nothing would escape the penetrating eye of Mr. Selby, who would most probably judge of her future conduct of *his house*, by the decent regularity and condition of *her own*.

The reader will have no reason to blame her for this species of prudent foresight, since he will, no doubt, allow it to be no small recommendation of a partner for life, to a reasonable man, to be convinced that she is a *good housewife*; and he must know that it is very possible to possess *every sense but common sense*; and that this is a very great misfortune to the possessor, as well as his or her connections.

CHAP. IX.

Mr. Oliver at dinner at Selby-House.

MR. Oliver was punctual to his time at Mr. Selby's, and found him just disengaged from the business he had had to transact, during a long morning, with his tenants belonging to a distant estate. He received Mr. Oliver with his usual cordiality of friendship; and informed him that he had just read a letter from Mr. Falcon, in which he informed him, that on his arrival at the house

house of the patron of the living, he had learned that he was in London, and that having obtained his address there, he was on the point of following him; where, if he could be of any service to Mr. Selby or his other friends of the village, he should be happy to be favoured with a letter, directed to him at ——— Hotel.

"I think this," continued Mr. Selby, "to be so favourable a circumstance, with respect to the enquiries we wish to be made concerning the Belmont family, that I shall write to him in such a manner, as that he may produce my letter, in justification of his paying a personal visit to Mr. Belmont, and renewing those solicitations of information, which I had communicated before by letter: and if," said he, "any directions should lead to a search to be made in London and its environs, he may be at hand to pursue it before his return; although I shall let him know of *a certain good office* he has

to perform for me the latter end of the next week, for which I should be sorry to employ any substitute in his place. Concluding that this extension of his journey may be an inconvenient, as well as an unexpected call on his purse, I shall take care to inclose him something in aid of his own resources. It is the business of friendship," added he, "to *anticipate* the wants of those whom it really esteems; and to spare them the necessity of signifying them, in order to be relieved or prevented. It is a poor pretext which is often made for backwardness on this head, that we do not *know* that assistance is required, or will be accepted.—Where confidence has previously subsisted between the parties, conjecture most commonly amounts to certainty; and the tender, where it proves to be unnecessary, can never give offence."

" You think so justly and so delicately, my dear Sir," replied Mr. Oliver, " on every

every subject, that I have only to hear your sentiments, in order to approve them."

The dinner was now announced, and, after its unusual delay, was no unwelcome event. When it was over, Mr. Selby retired to fulfil his intentions, respecting his writing to Mr. Falcon; and we may depend upon it, that he was not forgetful of the inclosure, to which he alluded in his conversation with Mr. Oliver. The reader may perhaps wonder why he should have mentioned such a circumstance to him at all; and he may be inclined to think it rather *ostentation* than otherwise. But let him remember, that the intimacy between Mr. Selby and Mr. Oliver was so strictly *confidential*, that discourse between them was only thinking aloud; and it may be right to explain to him, that Mr. Selby esteeming acts of beneficence to be *not meritorious deeds*, *which be bad the option of performing or omitting*, but *duties indispensable*, had men-

tioned this donation to his friend, merely to shew him that he had no more left undone this good office to Mr. Falcon, than that which his letter intended to render to Mrs. Audley. He left it to the children of avarice and prodigality, the first of whom *never give*, as the last *give without any principle of charity at all*, to consider the declaration of an act of generosity, as a forcible stimulus to the doing of it. For his part, he had named his design to Mr. Oliver, *as a matter of course*; an intimation of a fact to a kindred mind, which, under similar circumstances, would have gone and done likewise. These explanations may perhaps be considered as unnecessary; but since we *know*, from undoubted authority, that Mr. Selby was a man of the *purest benevolence, and the truest charity*, as well as the *profoundest humility*, we should extremely regret that our readers should not do him the strictest justice. In fact, to think evil of him, would be to dishonour virtue itself, as impossible to be

be exemplified in human nature ; and would be to afford a triumph to the wicked and the hypocritical, which we have no inclination to indulge them in. We have, therefore, thought it incumbent on us to step beyond our general line of leaving something to be understood, that if there *should* be any inclined to censure our much esteemed friend, Mr. Selby, it might not be from any misrepresentation or omission on our part.

CHAP. X.

Some intelligence from Mr. Falcon.

FOUR days had now elapsed since Mr. Selby had written to Mr. Falcon, when, as he and Mr. Oliver were at Selby-House, conversing on the subject of the letter which had been sent to him to London, the post brought the following letter from him to Mr. Selby :—

“ *London,*

" London, ——— Hotel, Oct. 179—.

" MY DEAR SIR,

" I had many reasons of inclination and duty to have sooner answered your obliging letter, for which I am, upon every account, greatly your debtor; but I was wishful to have an interview with Mr. Belmont, in order to be possessed of something worthy to be communicated on a subject so highly interesting to us all. It is not till this morning that he has condescended to see me, after repeated calls; and notwithstanding that I left a written note, informing him of the purport of my visit, and referring him to the contents of the letter which he had received from you.

" At length this great man has vouchsafed to give me an audience for a few minutes; he received me with that coldness and hauteur, which chills and confounds an inferior, and, where he has a favour to ask, is a certain prognostic of a refusal. Happily

pily for me I had no other favour to ask, than the answering one or two questions; and this seemed, in his opinion, to be more than I had a right to expect, and greater condescension than he ought to shew to the poor Curate of _____. He said, that he was rather surprised that you or myself should conceive that he could recollect any thing concerning the *young woman*, who had been *bired* to attend his mother abroad. In fact, he knew nothing more of her than having once or twice seen her before they left England; and owned she was a decent looking person, but *too proud for her low condition*, as was too often the case with people of *her stamp*. He had received a letter from her, during his mother's illness, which was signed *Arabella Manley*; and *since* her death, and the young woman's return, she had written him a note, offering to wait on him, to deliver a picture of the deceased, which she had been ordered to bring to him herself, by his mother; and that note he believed was addressed

dressed from — street, or some such obscure place, No. 10, or 15, he could not tell which ; and that having answered her, that she should bring the picture on such a morning, (which he named to her) she had come, and had left the picture, he not having thought it worth the trouble of seeing her. He said, that he supposed there would be now no necessity to answer your letter, for that I knew all he had to communicate, and more than he had wished to be troubled about.

“ I felt so shocked at the insolence of his deportment, so truly characteristic of a *great man*, in the *worldly* acceptance of the expression, that I was glad to be rid of his company as soon as possible ; and he need not fear another visit or application from myself, nor do I conceive that *you* will honour him with another address.

“ I, how-

" I, however, did not fail immediately to pursue the vague directions he had given me ; and I found out the little lodging where *Miss Arabella Manley* had taken up her abode for a few days after her return. Since that period, the people of the house informed me, that she had gone into the country, but where they could not tell ; they believed in *Wales*. It was to the master of the house, and his daughter that I had an opportunity of speaking : they said that the mistress of the family, (the wife of the one, and the mother of the other) who was gone into the country for *two* days, might *possibly* inform me more to my satisfaction.

" Having finished my own particular business much to my satisfaction, and met with the kindest reception from Mr. ———, to whom your letter, on the subject of the living, was addressed, I have only to wait for the event of the two days, when I shall set my face for home, in the pleasing expectation

tion of finding my three valuable and beloved friends in perfect health.

" I congratulate you most sincerely on the approaching circumstance of which you allude, and will perform the part required of me with the alacrity of a sincere and much obliged friend. As such, with best regards to Mr. Oliver and Mrs. Audley,

" I remain, my dear Sir,
" Most truly and faithfully your's,

" J. FALCON."

" Our friend," said Mr. Selby, on concluding his letter, " has taken a great deal of pains, but to very little purpose as yet. We shall see or hear from him at the conclusion of the two days, and perhaps shall gain something more clear and satisfactory on which to ground our hopes or our knowledge. At present the whole floats upon the wing of conjecture, and it is painful to an anxious

anxious mind to be suspended under such a guidance. I wish, however, that Mrs. Audley might see the letter; and, after dinner, will take the liberty of committing it to your care, to be communicated to her. I think that it was rather fortunate that Mr. Falcon was in town, as it is more than probable that Mr. Belmont would not have vouchsafed to answer my letter.— Of all the liberties which the great take with those whom they conceive to be their inferiors, the most insolent and the most intolerable is that of not answering their letters. It has ever been the principle of *my* life to be punctual in my epistolary correspondence; and, in proportion as the writer was humiliated and unfortunate, I have been the more scrupulous in replying. *To bruise the broken reed, and to treat the poor and the distressed with neglect and contempt, is a sacrilege upon human nature.* These observations do not, indeed, apply to Mr. Belmont

Belmont and myself, between whom there can be *no* inequality; but they have naturally arisen out of the subject of Mr. Falcon's letter, and I could not avoid expressing them to you."

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Mr. Oliver's walk to the cottage.

WHEN the dinner was over, and the two friends had remained a short time together, Mr. Oliver, without waiting for tea, took the letter from Mr. Selby, and proceeded to the cottage, in order to give Mrs. Audley an opportunity of reading it. Although there was nothing at all decisive in its contents, yet it made a species of break and interval in the state of suspense, in

in which a continued silence left them ; and therefore if it could not *relieve* pain, it served to *amuse* it for a moment. He got home just as the good lady was set down to her tea, who received him with that welcome which always greeted his return. He was not long before he put the letter into her hands, which she eagerly opened and read. The tears started in her eyes, as they glanced over that passage which recounted Mr. Belmont's insolent manner of speaking of the young lady, who, she was firmly persuaded, was her own daughter ; but whether she was or not, her feelings could not fail to be excited at such undeserved and ungenerous liberty taken with the unfortunate.

" That scorn and contumely,
" Which patient merit of the unworthy takes,"

seemed to touch her to the quick ; and when she reflected that all that and worse her daughter might have been obliged to endure for a long and wearisome period ; and

now

now that she was about to be raised to a situation, wherein she could protect her from the frowns of an ungracious and unfeeling world, the consideration that she was yet out of the reach of her maternal affection—this complicated view of what was passed, and of what was yet to come, combined to render her for a moment truly miserable.

When she ended the letter, Mr. Oliver suffered the tide of sorrow to subside before he spoke; and when he found her more composed, he gently reproved her for giving way so much to feelings which were extremely pernicious to herself, and could not be of service to any one. He observed to her, that pride and insolence, like Mr. Belmont's, was best requited with contempt; that, at any rate, it did not appear that the young lady in question had been subject to its influence. The account of his mother, as given by Mr. Selby's correspondent, had been extremely in her favour; and therefore

fore it certainly was as well to conceive that she had been happy with her as otherwise. The world sufficiently abounded with real sorrow, without burdening ourselves with additional woes, which were created by a fruitful imagination. He observed, that the name of the young lady was said to be *Arabella Manley*; the coincidence of the *christian* name was certainly very flattering, nor was the difference of the *surname* of any consequence, as it was more than probable, that when obliged to embark on a life of dependence, she would chuse to drop her family name, from motives of delicacy, which had influenced Mrs. Audley under similar circumstances of distress.

Mrs. Audley replied, that she had made the same remark on reading the letter, and had silently commented on it, to a similar effect with himself. She had been prepared for hearing that the young lady would have a name different from her own, although she

should be her daughter ; and that the *christian* name should be the same as her's, was a ground of hope on which she built a very substantial superstructure. " However," concluded she, " two or three days more will most probably give us greater light than we at present possess. And after waiting so long as I have already done, I must surely be able to be patient for their interval. Yet when the supreme is contracted to a narrow compass, and our view extends, as it were, to both sides of the strait, which divides us from the shore we wish to reach, the separation is the more irksome, and the trial the more severe."

" I can only say to you, my dear Madam," answered Mr. Oliver, " that the greater the difficulty, the higher will be your merit in overcoming it. The change, which is so soon to take place in your condition, will give you every advantage in surmounting it which you can desire. And it is

is impossible that you can have more sincere friends than you possess to co-operate with your own endeavours, and to promote the accomplishment of your wishes. I am the least affluent of the party; but I can only repeat to you now, what, I trust, my general conduct must have long ago proved to you to be the fact, that what I *can* do, you may command to the utmost of my ability. And, perhaps, there is no moment when we feel so poignantly our deficiencies, and our necessities, as that wherein we are sensible that a friend stands in need of our sources, and are equally convinced that it is out of our power to exert any efforts in their behalf. The consciousness of inability is always afflicting; but when it precludes the exercise of the virtues of benevolence and friendship, it is oppressive and distressing to the last degree: *it is torturing the animal with the agonies of man.*"

CHAP. XII.

Mr. Falcon returns to the village.

NOTHING particular passed for four days; at the end of which period Mr. Falcon made his appearance at Selby-House, where he alighted from his journey without going home. Mr. Oliver happened to be with Mr. Selby at the time of his arrival; and no event could, at that season, have been more welcome than his joining them. Their enquiries naturally led them to know what information he had further gained

gained on the subject of the young lady. He told them, that he had waited impatiently for the expiration of the two days, when the good woman came home. All that he had learned from her, was such a description of her person as gave him every reason to believe that she was his Arabella. As to the place of her retreat, she had assured him that it was in some part of Wales ; but where exactly she could not tell. The young lady, she complained, was extremely reserved, and seemed to be under great affliction and habitual melancholy ; but what was the cause of it she had never revealed. Her dress was that of deep mourning, which, she apprehended, was on account of the death of a very particular friend ; but this event, although a great misfortune, was not the sole reason, she was sure, of her extreme dejection. Her confidence, however, had not gone beyond that point ; and all the good woman said farther was her own conjecture, and entirely unsatisfactory.

tisfactory. "Knowing," added Mr. Falcon, "that the search of my dear girl, on this information, was likely to be a work of time; and that my presence here would be requisite, as well for my parochial business, as on account of my worthy friend, Mr. Selby, I determined to come home first, and afterwards to set out on a peregrination through Wales, to find, if possible, the beauteous stranger, in the fond hope that she is my long lost Arabella."

His friends could not do otherwise than approve what he had done; although they were still left to depend upon hope, yet deferred, with very little prospect of its being realized. After taking some refreshment, he took his leave, saying that he thought it his duty to see Mrs. Audley as soon as possible, to inform her of the success of his enquiries, and of the plan he intended to pursue after the important business of the week was completed. Mr. Oliver accompanied

panied him in his walk to the cottage ; and they found Mrs. Audley busied in preparations for the marriage, which was now very near at hand. She received Mr. Falcon with visible anxiety in her countenance ; and he hastened to relieve her, at least from that state of suspense which proceeded from her not knowing what he had learned after the two days mentioned in his letter to Mr. Selby. He, in few words, proceeded therefore to recount to her what he had just before related at Selby-House.

Mrs. Audley plainly perceived that her hopes were still involved in the greatest obscurity ; and that little advantage could be promised to themselves from so vague a pursuit after an unknown person, somewhere concealed in Wales, who, when found, might not be the individual whom they only flattered themselves that she was.

This turn to the conversation produced the effect he wished ; peace and tranquillity resumed their place in the minds of his friends, and they parted happy under their influence.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

*Containing some intelligence which the Reader has
for some time had reason to expect.*

THE day was now at hand, which was to unite Mrs. Audley with Mr. Selby.— Every thing was duly arranged and prepared at his happy mansion for the change which was about to take place. Messieurs Oliver and Falcon took possession of the apartments which they were to occupy; and nothing was wanting to initiate Mrs.

Audley into her privileges, as mistress of the whole, but the ceremony which made her the wife of Mr. Selby.

At length the day actually arose when the event was decided to happen. The gentlemen proceeded, in Mr. Selby's carriage, to the cottage, to take up Mrs. Audley; and from thence conducted her to the church, where the housekeeper, in all the prim neatness of her station, was ready to receive them.

When Mr. Falcon had discharged his duty, with the becoming solemnity of the service, they bent their way to Selby-House, which now, for the first time, the bride (whom we shall henceforth distinguish by the name of Selby) entered, and was saluted, by all her party, as lady paramount of Selby-House. The servants were admitted to pay their compliments to their new mistress, who received them with that dignified com-

posure and propriety, which proved that she was not raised to a new station, but had only resumed a rank to which she had been born, and was accustomed to fill.

The day being remarkably fine, they soon proposed a walk over the spacious and elegant grounds, although their beauty was, in some measure, obscured and lost by the season of the year, which divested the trees of that luxuriant vegetation which adorned them in the summer. In the course of their walk they naturally went into the green-house and hot-house; and Mr. Oliver pointed out to Mrs. Selby his little collection of plants, which he had removed from the cottage, and seemed to be revived in the advantageous situation in which they were now placed.

The view of those ancient companions of her solitude, recalling days of sorrow and distress, drew from her eyes an involuntary

tear, which she hastily wiped away, left it should seem to ill accord with the felicity of the engagement she had on that day entered into with one of the worthiest of men.— From these her attention was diverted to the variety of beauty and fragrance which bloomed around her, and which Mr. Selby explained to her in the most intelligible and pleasing terms, as he selected for her a nosegay of such as were most grateful to the senses of sight and smell; and presented them with an affectionate grace, which more than doubly enhanced their value.

After having spent two hours very pleasantly in these occupations, they adjourned to the house, where the dinner soon after made its appearance, spread with an extraordinary degree of elegance and profusion, in honour of the occasion. Nothing could exceed the harmony and sociability of the party, who seemed, on this day, to have forgotten their sorrows, and to be determined

mined to render each other and themselves as happy as possible.

Mrs. Oldfield, the housekeeper, had been empowered to prepare a festive board for the servants, who, in their turn, partook of the plenty and comfort which prevailed above. Nor were the poor of the village forgotten. All who chose to come to the house were abundantly feasted, and joined in congratulating themselves, as well as the parties immediately concerned, on the event which had recalled domestic happiness to Selby-House.

The evening passed pleasantly on ; and it was proposed, by Mr. Selby, to fit up the cottage in a style of rustic elegance, as a place of occasional repast for the inhabitants of his hospitable mansion, when they wished to pass a rural day in that comfort, in that comfortable littleness, wherein two, at least, of them had for more than three years

years found a quiet asylum from the storms and troubles of life.

" We will fix," said Mr. Selby, " some worthy old woman there, and furnish her with a cow ; and when we are inclined to take our tea there, she will understand that we expect that she will find us in such cream as you, my dear Madam, used' to indulge Mr. Oliver with. Since the cottage is undoubtedly your's, I must leave it to you to find out an inhabitant, and make her as comfortable as the donation of your own household goods can render her."

" If she manages these means," said Mr. Oliver, " as skilfully as Mrs. Selby, her lot may be envied by many. In making so valuable a present to the person who will influence your choice, Madam, (said he, turning to Mrs. Selby) you must contrive to infuse some of your own gentle and patient spirit into her constitution, to enable her to tread

tread in those steps, which rendered you as truly respectable there, as now, when presiding over the household of Selby-House."

Mrs. Selby bowed her assent and acknowledgment to the proposal and the compliment which had been made her. Various topics employed and amused the remaining hours of the evening; and the friends separated, rather at a later hour than usual, to their several apartments for the night.

CHAP. XIV.

Mr. Falcon's journey.

MR. Falcon gave up one week to the pleasure which he derived from the society of his friends. At the end of that time, having made arrangements with a brother clergyman for a month's performance of his duty, in case that he should be obliged to be so long absent from home, he intimated, at Selby-House, his intention of setting out, in two days, into Wales, in pursuit of the
dear

dear object of his affections. When he came, however, to consult with Mr. Selby and Mr. Oliver, on the route he should take, he found much greater difficulties in establishing a rational plan for his movements, than he had first conceived would attend it.

After various discussions on the subject, it was agreed upon by them, that he should direct his first course into *South Wales*, and take up his quarters in each of its principal towns for a day or two, in order to make minute enquiries in them and their environs; and, as he advanced, leave behind him, in every one of the head-quarters, such written enquiries, to be made by some person to whom he should confide the business, with a direction in each, to address any information, which might be obtained, to Selby-House; as it might be difficult, in case of any intelligence being gained, to find *him* out, in the progress of his tour.

And

And then should such intelligence, as Mr. Selby and Mr. Oliver should think of any importance, arrive there, Mr. Oliver would set off immediately to the place from whence it came, and prosecute the object in view with as little delay as possible. This seemed to be the most feasible scheme which the friends could think of in the present dilemma; and it was evident that it could not be pursued with any regularity or convenience by any mode of travelling but that of post-chaises, which would involve an expence not quite convenient to Mr. Falcon's finances.

Mr. Selby, whose temper it was always to anticipate the wants of a friend, and ever to render effectual any plan which he either laid down, adopted, or recommended to others, immediately foresaw that his assistance would be needful; and as immediately observed to Mr. Falcon, that he must remember that he was in search of Mrs. Selby's

by's and his daughter :—“ Upon which account,” said he, “ you must give us leave to defray the charges of the tour you are about to undertake.” He then put into his hand an hundred pounds ; adding, that if he should require farther aid, he had only to intimate the necessity to him, and he would directly attend to it. This seasonable provision removed every difficulty. The eyes of Mr. Falcon and Mrs. Selby acknowledged the goodness of the donor, and the obligations under which he laid them both ; and now the only point to be considered was to set out as soon as possible.

Accordingly, having packed up his portmanteau, and bade his friends adieu, he entered the chaise, accompanied with a thousand affectionate wishes from them for his welfare and success.

He felt very strongly, in his own mind, that the pursuit was almost hopeless, the
Quixotism

Quixotism of a romantic lover ; but he consoled himself in undertaking it, that, should it prove wholly unsuccessful, his mind would be satisfied in the conviction that he had done his utmost to regain his long-lost treasure, which, if it still remained in concealment from his wishes, he must set down contented under the manifest impossibility of finding it ; whereas, if he should *not* make the attempt, he should always continue to reproach his indolence, and be led to believe that greater activity would have certainly been successful.

With the force of this reasoning he was urged forward, not knowing, in fact, where he was going, but determining to make his first stop for two days at —, in prosecution of the little plan of operations which had been marked out for him.

" Hope sped his steps, and Love his heart still warm'd,
" Youth's vigour urg'd his anxious progress on :
" While cooler Reason, with precaution arm'd
" Against a conflict, to be lost or won.

" Se

“ So on the stormy main the wand’rer sails,
 “ Conscious of danger, yet prepar’d to meet
“ A wat’ry death from all-devouring gales,
 “ Or, on the wing of zephyrs, home to greet :—

“ His skilful *band* the moving rudder holds,
 “ And, on the deep, the fragile bark directs ;
“ His steady *eye* the guiding star beholds ;
 “ His *soul* the God, whose providence protects”

CHAP. XV.

Mr. Falcon's journey continued.

IT had been agreed on by Mr. Falcon, with his friends at Selby-House, that he should write to them from each of the places, where he stopped for any time beyond a single night, whether he gained any intelligence or not; as well that they might hear of his welfare, as that they might be able, if necessary, to form a probable conjecture where he was, in case that they should wish to write

write to him. They had received two or three of these unsatisfactory communications, and began now to open his letters without any emotion of expectation ; when, at length, after about a fortnight's absence, they were unexpectedly indulged with the following letter, from ——, addressed to Mr. Selby :—

“ Nov. the —, 179—.

“ MY DEAR SIR,

“ You must, by this time, be tired of receiving letters from me, only to inform you that I am well, and still in pursuit of what I had not found. At length, I hope, you will be better satisfied with my communications, the result of which I am as anxious to give you, as you can be to be informed of it.

“ It is now three days since I arrived at this place. Having fixed on the place of my residence, I assumed my usual plan of enquiry,

enquiry, which I have uniformly pursued as I went on. I informed myself, at the principal inns, whether any young lady, in deep mourning, had stopped there within a certain time, which I pointed out; and whether such a person lodged in the town to which they belonged. After a variety of enquiries to no purpose, I was at length informed by the keeper of the — inn, that there *was* a young lady resident here, who answered my description. As the informant was not precise as to the part of the town in which she lived, I was obliged to have recourse to my own address in discovering the stranger; and, at last, was directed to a neat but small lodging-house, where a person, similar to her I was in search of, lodged.

“ I sent up as civil a message as I could frame to the lady, desiring the honour of an interview, for reasons which I would explain to her satisfaction when I saw her. After a short delay I was admitted, but found

found that I was mistaken in the object of my pursuit. The stranger was in mourning, extremely elegant in her person, and graceful in her address ; and received my explanatory apology with the utmost good breeding and urbanity. She smiled as she replied, that she had not the good fortune to be the amiable person about whom I was so anxious, but said that she *believed* she knew her.

" You will easily conceive my extreme surprise and perturbation at the intelligence ; which she observed, and added, " Do not, Sir, be so surprised ; the young lady, whom I conceive that you are in search of, does not reside in this town, but at a little village ten miles off, and I have the pleasure of her intimate acquaintance and confidence."

" I told her then my name, which, she said, she had heard her friend mention ; and

very kindly offered to accompany me to the village of her residence. I need not tell you that no proposal could have been more agreeable ; and I made haste to get a chaise to convey us. In as few words as I can use, I tell you, that *we went, and I have seen my long lost Arabella* ; and have been received by her with a welcome, which amply repays all that I have suffered on her account.

" The amiable object of our anxieties is in perfect health ; and my relation of Mrs. Selby's welfare, and most desirable situation in life, has removed from her mind that gloom, which she has been described to us as habitually wearing the semblance of on her countenance. I defer any particulars of past transactions until she can detail them to her worthy and respectable mother, in her own language, and from her own lips.

" She accompanied her female friend (Miss Harcourt) and myself to this town ; and

and to-morrow will remove her effects from the village where she resided, in order to accompany me, with as little delay as possible, to Selby-House.

" I have thought it most adviseable that our coming should be preceded by this letter, in order to spare Mrs. Selby the abruptness of an interview, which would make so important a discovery. *Sudden pleasures are often as pernicious as sudden afflictions*; and your good lady's nerves are too delicate to be shocked by any event, however delightful, without serious consequences being likely to ensue from the alarm. Upon this account, I hope that she will pardon me for robbing her of her Arabella's company for two or three days. The suspense will be, no doubt, very painful; but her character is that of patience, and, perhaps, I have taken the greater liberty from that conviction.—The post is on the eve of going out, and I hasten to ensure the conveyance of these

happy tidings. I expect no answer, as I shall leave this place before I can receive it. With every kind and affectionate remembrance,

“ I remain, my dear Sir,

“ Your faithful and obliged

“ J. FALCON.”

P. S. (In the hand of Miss Falkland).—“I just subjoin one line of dutiful remembrance to my dear and honoured mother, to convince her, from under *my own band*, that I am alive and well, and most anxiously desirous to see her, as soon as possible, in the hope of never again being parted on this side the grave.

“ A. FALKLAND.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XVI.

What the Reader will naturally bespeak from the contents of the preceding Chapter.

THERE are some particular situations which produce emotions that baffle all the powers of description ; and it, perhaps, betrays the greatest vanity, and the most entire want of judgment, to attempt to obtrude on the reader a bad picture of a subject, which does not admit of the delineations of the pencil. We consider the discovery conveyed to Selby-House by Mr. Falcon, as one

of those situations ; and, upon the principle of the observation which we have just made, we shall think it most prudent and proper to leave it to the reader's imagination to conceive the result, to which we are unable to do justice by the feeble efforts of the pen.

Mr. Selby's and Mr. Oliver's presence and endeavours were very necessary, and at length effectual, to quiet and allay the excessive joy of Mrs. Selby on a disclosure for which she had been so long anxiously looking, and had begun now to despair that it would ever be made. We can easily believe that she counted the hours between the happy moment of the arrival of Mr. Falcon's letter, and the still happier one which should bring him home, accompanied by the darling object of her maternal affections :—not, indeed, the prodigal returning to be pardoned, and received again by a fond and forgiving father ; but a long lost daughter,

daughter, whom she had mourned as suffering under the rod of affliction, unknown in her situation, perhaps already a victim in the grave to a burden which had been too heavy for her to bear !

It was not possible that she should see her sooner than *five* days from the date of Mr. Falcon's letter ; and those five days were, in her estimation, an age ; and she felt that *sickness of the heart*, which, we are told, is the effect of *hope deferred*. Poignant, however, as her feelings were, they were extremely corrected and blunted by the placid temper which habitually presided in her mind, softened her expressions, and modulated her actions.

This tedious interval was, however, destined to be fulfilled ; and, at length, Mrs. Selby beheld her daughter presented to her in the lovely, blushing bloom of life, by that man to whom, of all others, she wished

to see her united. In the plenitude of her feelings on the occasion, which seemed to crown every wish of her heart, she was almost ready to say with Jacob, at the sight of his beloved Joseph, “ Now let me die, since I have seen thy face ;” but, in truth, her heart was so oppressed by the sentiments which crowded upon it, that she was incapable of utterance, and she could only look unutterable tenderness, and unspeakable felicity, at the blissful meeting ! It was a work of some labour, address, and time to compose the perturbations of the parties immediately concerned ; and those who only sympathized with them, had struggles of a very interesting kind to suppress, before they could administer effectual assistance to them, under the complicated sensibilities by which they were actuated in the extreme. Every thing, however, which is human, is destined to come to an end ; and time gradually restored them to a state of comfort and satisfaction which was tolerable to their feelings. We omit

omit the mutual congratulations and compliments of the happy party on the occasion. The intelligent reader will fully comprehend their nature, and conclude that they were paid, without *our* information. It is sufficient for us to say, that the mother and the daughter were mutually gratified, in the utmost extent, at the sight of their respective health and appearance, which was infinitely more favourable than their apprehensive tenderness for each other's fate, when absent, had led them to fear that they would be. A crowd of questions and answers, imperfectly uttered and heard, was hastily interchanged; and they were soon convinced that it was necessary to defer their curiosity, in order to its being gratified. Miss Falkland, indeed, had anticipated much information from Mr. Falcon; but Mrs. Selby remained in total ignorance of many particulars which she longed to be acquainted with. Mr. Selby was, as usual, active in promoting the real comfort of those around him; and gently

interrupted the intense efforts of her mind on subjects too interesting to be long dwelt upon, by requesting to be introduced to his daughter-in-law. Mr. Oliver, penetrating the reason of this intrusion, seconded the request, by a similar one on his own behalf; and the company was, at last, in a condition to sit down to a quiet supper, and to prepare for a tranquil night's rest, after much agitation and discomposure.

CHAP. XVII.

Transactions at Selby-House, in continuation.

IT is very natural to suppose that many days would not elapse before Mrs. Selby's anxiety to be informed of the various events which had befallen her daughter, would engage her to relate, as circumstantially as was necessary, their succession, from the departure of her uncle and herself from —, to the happy moment which discovered her

concealment in South Wales to the assiduous pursuit of the faithful and affectionate Mr. Falcon.

Accordingly, on one rainy day, when the inhabitants of Selby-House were debarred from taking any exercise or amusement without doors, and were assembled, after breakfast, round a cheerful fire, in their usual sitting-room, Mrs. Selby reminded Miss Falkland that she was still in her debt, on the subject of her history; and that all the party, then present, were confidential witnesses of its discharge, if not inconvenient to herself.

Miss Falkland replied, that she was fully convinced of her obligation, and was at her service, and that of the amiable party by whom she was surrounded, to repay it, whenever she and they should desire it.

This

This ready compliance, we may be assured, was suitably received; and Miss Falkland, without much preface, began her simple story in as few words as she could deliver it in, and nearly to the following effect:—

“ You have, my dear mother, I apprehend, heard of the dreadful disaster which, at one blow, crushed my uncle’s fortune into nothing but a few shattered remains, which were hardly worthy a name. It became, therefore, absolutely necessary that he should immediately dispose of the house we inhabited, with the furniture and plate belonging to it, in order to preserve us from actual and inevitable want and distress. This he happened to have an opportunity of doing advantageously, directly as he determined upon it.

“ His plan was to retire to London, as the place where, of all others, a family might live

live as they pleased, without being noticed or animadverted on in their obscurity. This plan he executed ; and intended, on his arrival there, to inform my mother of every thing, and to propose to her that we should live together, and share the trifles which remained among us. Unfortunately, however, *her* misfortunes had come upon her at the same time ; and it was destined that we should not meet in the hour of our adversity, when we might have mutually consoled each other.

" My uncle did not long continue easy, under the reverse which his fortune had sustained ; and anxiety of mind soon preyed on and destroyed his health. I paid him every attention, and procured him the best medical advice and attendance in my power ; but *a broken heart is a disease which baffles all human skill and address to heal it !* The wound is inward, and beyond the reach of the physician. It sometimes is slow in destroying,

stroying, but it is effectual at the last. It was to this attack that my uncle fell a victim after some few months; and, after his death, when I had paid all the expences which had been unavoidably incurred, I found my finances very slender indeed; insomuch that, having no hope of hearing of my beloved mother, I was fain to accept of the kind advice and assistance of Dr. L—, who had attended my poor uncle, and was then performing the same office to Mrs. Belmont, for whom he prescribed a tour on the Continent for the recovery of her health.

" Through his friendship he recommended me to her as a companion on the excursion; and I set out with her, after one or two interviews with her at her own house, where I had the honour of seeing the supercilious Mr. Belmont, her son, who has been already described to you by Mr. Falcon.

We

" We embarked, and arrived at Hamburg; from whence we travelled slowly into those parts of the country which were not infested with the calamities of war.— Our adventures are not worthy to be remembered on the present occasion.

" My amiable friend's health declined so rapidly, that we returned to Hamburg, intending to get back to England, that she might close her life with her family; but, in this natural desire she was frustrated, and she died there, without any female friend with her but myself, and at a distance from all her family. It is needless to say how much I was shocked with this second dereliction which I was doomed to experience.

" Having received my deceased Mrs. Belmont's moderate bequest, I had nothing left for me to do but to return to my native country, which I did with all convenient expedition;

expedition ; and, having come to London only to deliver to Mr. Belmont a small parcel, which his dying mother had entrusted to my hand, I concentrated my humble fortune in money, and retired into Wales, in the utmost privacy and economical obscurity, waiting in the humble hope that that Providence, who had hitherto preserved and protected me, would, in his own good time, bring about that event which has now united me to my mother, well and happy ; and permitted me to witness Mr. Falcon's occupying that place in society, which my partial friendship always induced me to believe had rightfully belonged to him.

" I have only given my friends the outline of my story, conceiving that *that* would be sufficient. It is a very simple one indeed ; and nothing but their kind partiality could have induced them to have given me the patient attention which they have descended

descended to bestow upon the humble narrative of an unfortunate, weak, yet innocent girl, who has been the child of adversity, and has not, I trust, been radically the worse for the series of sufferings which she has been enduring for some years."

CHAP.

CHAP. XVIII.

Scene still continues at Selby-House.

THE reader will, doubtless, have observed, in the preceding narrative, that Miss Falkland had merely glanced at the subject of Mr. Falcon. He must not conclude from that silence that she was less attached to him than has been asserted in the former part of the history; but he should remember that Mr. Falcon himself was present, and that his presence was accompanied by

by that of Mr. Oliver and Mr. Selby. We must, therefore, make a thousand allowances for female delicacy under these circumstances ; and leave our fair friend to make her confessions in those delicious moments of confidence with which she occasionally indulged the faithful partner of her heart. All this was thoroughly understood by the company, who were not at all surprised at this omission in her narrative. As to Mr. Falcon himself, he was so fully acquainted with her mind, that he felt no anxiety at her apparent neglect of himself ; so far from it, he suffered but a short time to elapse before he began very warmly to urge his suit, and soon drew, on his side, the whole of the party at Selby-House ; insomuch that Miss Falkland found it in vain to resist that accumulation of persuasion by which she was assailed from so many quarters, on which she was least able to make any effectual opposition. The result of their arguments was to convince her of the inexpediency and even absurdity
of

of delaying the completion of an union, which had been so long in agitation ; and, but for the variety of insurmountable impediments, would have been concluded a considerable time before.

There is a force in truth which is irresistible, especially when it is conveyed to us by the most pleasing means, independently of its being in itself of a nature to give us secret satisfaction. All these qualifications combined to render the propriety of the speedy celebration of this marriage incontestible ; and, accordingly, it was decided upon *ne-mine contradicente.*

An early day was fixed for the purpose ; and Mr. Falcon prevailed on a particular friend to officiate in giving the nuptial benediction. As Miss Falkland made it an earnest request that her beloved Miss Harcourt, whom she had confidentially known in Wales in the hour of her adversity, might

night now be invited to witness her prosperity, and the approach of her final happiness with that Mr. Falcon whom she had so often mentioned to her as the object of her earliest affection, when it was yet doubtful to her whether he deserved to command it, or would ever approach her to claim the privileges annexed to that enviable preference; that gentleman would fain have been the bearer of the request; but it was thought by Mrs. Selby that a letter from her daughter, inclosed in one from herself, would answer every purpose. Such a packet was therefore dispatched, and was received by Miss Harcourt with that cordial acceptance which it was intended to produce.

The week before the time appointed, she, agreeably to the tenor of the invitation which had been forwarded to her, arrived at Selby-House; and we may

venture to assert that nothing was wanting to complete the happiness of its inhabitants. Mrs. Selby, in particular, felt an inconceivable pleasure in entertaining the kind and faithful companion and friend of her daughter when she stood, as it were, alone, in a cruel and supercilious world; and Miss Falkland, who knew her friend's contracted situation, delighted in the prospect of seeing her, when her own circumstances would enable her to remove its difficulties, and render her more comfortable than she had ever been.

This previous week was soon past over, and the joyful day, which was to terminate every hope and fear in a happy certainty, at length arrived. Mr. Falcon led his beauteous bride to the altar, and Mr. Selby resigned her to him in wedlock.

We

We feel it entirely needless to repeat here, what every reader's fertile imagination will easily conceive. Suffice it to say, that Mr. and Mrs. Selby, with their guests, were as happy as worthy persons in this imperfect scene can ever be.

'They were all too well read in the book of human destinies to expect *Utopian* felicity, and *Eldorado* enjoyments; and, therefore, what they experienced was adequate to their wishes: *such an allotment as the wise never flatter themselves with obtaining; but which, when obtained, they use temperately, and with a conviction that the tenure on which they hold it, is extremely uncertain and precarious.*

The festive season was happily spent; tranquil comfort succeeded to tumultuous joy; and Miss Harcourt returned to her peaceful retirement, with those friendly aids from Mrs. Falcon, which removed present incon-

inconveniences, and were tendered as the earnest of future remembrances of equal value and importance to her ease and competence of circumstances, which none, her friend was persuaded, deserved better than herself.

CHAP. XIX.

The History recurs particularly to Mr. Oliver.

EVERY one of the inhabitants of Selby-House seemed now to have arrived at the summit of their wishes, and to be completely happy, *except Mr. Oliver*. Not that we would mean to say that he betrayed any symptoms of dissatisfaction or distress, for this was very far from being the case.— When far less indulged with the comforts of life,

life, in the narrowness of the cottage scene to which he was attached, previously to his knowledge of Mr. Selby, he was superior to all the inequalities and perturbations of pining discontent, regretting and hankering after what was beyond its reach. All that we would mean to assert was, that he seemed to stand *alone* and *forlorn* in the present happy arrangements of domestic society, in which Mr. and Mrs. Falcon, and Mr. and Mrs. Selby were now finally established.

It was his constant and sincere endeavour to disguise, as far as possible, in his looks, words, and actions, that habitual gloom which had long hung over them. To the penetrating eye of his friends, however, the effort he made was clearly an exertion which he laboured to put on; and they felt no little pain in witnessing what he suffered, as he strove to remove from their observation the secret sorrows which

continually brooded over his perceptive recollection.

Mr. Selby, who had the happy art of reconciling the mind of the afflicted to the burden which his powers of relief did not enable him to remove, set himself industriously to work, to acquire so much knowledge of his real situation and circumstances, as would put it in his power to devise some effectual means to be of service to him, if that was possible; or, on the other hand, were his evils beyond the reach of remedy, to assist him in enduring them, by having them unbosomed to him, and taking that part of the burden which sympathy could appropriate.

If, perhaps, the reader should think it unreasonable that Mr. Oliver should express more than ordinary uneasiness, when his particular friends had been peculiarly blessed, we must reply for his justification—that the same

same degree of distress he had been long feeling, would appear more considerable when *they* were happily exonerated from their own anxieties; and that he himself must have been more than man, to have forbore to draw a comparison, *not of envy, but of bitter regret*, between their condition and his own. These regrets did not, however, render him insensible to the unwearied endeavours of Mr. Selby to console and comfort him, so as to remove the *reality* as well as the *appearance* of affliction from him.

After some little hesitation, he told his faithful friend, that he was conscious that it was indeed high time that he should act confidentially with him; and, he assured him, that his past reserve had not proceeded from any mistrust, but from an unaccountable reluctance which he felt in recurring to the multiplied causes of regret and self-reproach, which only lay *dormant* in his mind in the happiest moments which

he experienced. It was then but too natural that a sufferer like himself should tremble at the idea of *awaking* them to his own torment.—“ How, then, shall I,” said he, “ contrive a method of laying them again asleep ? Yet, when I consider that I may command the assistance of such a friend as yourself, to whom I lie under the highest obligations, I feel myself bound by ties which supersede every idea of personal ease from oblivion, to make such a sacrifice to your enquiries, as would testify that I acknowledge, in the fullest extent, that I am your debtor. Pardon me only, if I solicit to be permitted to make the disclosure in the manner least painful to myself; that I deliver it to you in *writing*, and that I be allowed to dwell upon some circumstances, and to skim over others, as they appear to me important, or have excited remarks and reflections which I conceive worthy of being recorded; or, on the contrary, are simple traits in my narrative, which,

which serve only to connect together events that are pre-eminently conspicuous and interesting to myself in the course of it.— Under these conditions, my dear friend, I will give myself the painful occupation,

—————“*Infandum renovare dolorem;*”

with as little delay, and as much candour as possible. Prepare yourself to behold a tissue of misconduct on my part; *much to blame, and much, I hope, to lament and pity me for!* Yet, in the *worst representation*, I bespeak of your benevolence to drop a tear over evil, which *cannot now be remedied, but is no longer persisted in*; and indulge me with an apostrophe of—*alas! poor human nature!* as a *requiem* to my follies, which are now extinct. *This moral, I flatter myself, you will draw for yourself and for others, from the relation I am about to give you—that imprudence is the worst failing of which we can be guilty, so far as our destination in this world is concerned.* *In another world*

the case is otherwise: folly is, doubtless, venial there; and integrity of intention, before the divine tribunal, will supply the place of perfect performance. Woe would it be for me, were I to be judged in heaven as I have been judged on earth!—But, gracious God! I know that “there is mercy with thee, though thou art to be feared.”

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

Mr. Oliver commences his Narrative.

IT was about a week after this conversation had taken place that Mr. Oliver, one morning, delivered to his friend, Mr. Selby, a paper parcel, containing the long wished-for narrative, which, after many struggles with himself, he had at length concluded; and requested him, at the same time, first to read it alone, and then, if he thought proper, to communicate its contents

to the rest of the party. The reader may depend that we will give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words.

MR. OLIVER'S NARRATIVE.

" IT was in a country very distant from this, beyond the seas, that I first drew the breath of life. It was in the lap of luxury and opulence that I was born. My father was a man of great reputed wealth, rank, and influence in the circle of society to which he belonged; and, though not destitute of faults, was possessed of many good qualities, which endeared him to his family and friends. My mother was every thing which could render her amiable and respectable to all who knew her; to her immediate family she was *invaluable*.

" I was one, the eldest, of three brothers, the only children she bore my father. My native

native country chanced to be one of those which are liable to those violent tempests of wind, rain, thunder, and lightning, which are distinguished by the name of *barricanes*—convulsions of elemental nature, wherein war and destruction seem to be proclaimed against every existence which is capable of perishing, or being injured.

" It was my fate to *precede*, in my birth, one of those tremendous phenomena, by a single day; and to sleep peaceful and undisturbed through the general crash, confusion, and terror, until after many hours the tempest had spent its fury, and the unfortunate sufferers had leisure to contemplate the ruin it had produced in the animal and vegetable kingdoms, and in the proudest and most solid superstructures of human art and industry.

" My mother has since told me, that she hoped that this singular occurrence would

be an omen of my passing through a life of trouble, disaster, and difficulty, *always unburt, though often in imminent danger!* The event has proved that her wish was prophetic.

"Nothing particular occurred in my infancy. But my earliest childhood was marked by the most assiduous endeavours of my best of mothers, to give me all the improvement and instructions of which my years were capable; and this laudable system of cultivation was pursued during all that period which is generally dedicated to the cares of education; and, I may venture to say, that my acquirements were fully adequate to my advantages, and the more I learned, the more I desired to learn; which inclination and zeal for knowledge has ever been the predominant taste and tendency of my mind.

"It was in the twelfth year of my life that my father was taken from his family by a lingering

lingering disorder, which, however equivocal in its symptoms, and slow in its progress, was fatal in its issue. His death brought the true state of his affairs to light; and though he died in the possession of very considerable property, he was really and truly insolvent.

" Fortunately, however, for all of us, I had a very large estate so entailed on me by a distant relation, that though my father enjoyed the profits of it for life, he could not encumber it with debt; and, therefore, the derangement of his affairs did not produce any personal distress amongst his surviving family, all of whom subsisted in comfort upon *my* means. Mine was, therefore, a state of independence; and, although this idea seldom or ever occurred in my mind, I can yet conceive, at this distant period, that it tended to nourish a secret spirit of self-will in its dark recesses, that have since proved very pernicious to my moral qualities.

" I do

" I do not know, however, in the main, that my youth was marked with any thing strikingly discommendable ; on the contrary, if I remember right, I had rather the reputation of extraordinary merit.

" My mother contracted a second marriage, and, though I suffered very serious injury in my fortune, through unintentional mistakes of her and my father-in-law, who undertook the management of my affairs, I yet apprehend that I was the better for again returning under the guidance of one performing the part of a father, by being checked in those overbearing manners that the elder son of a family is too apt to acquire in it ; and more especially when he looks forward to the obtaining of a property, independently of any modes of conciliation, whereby it would be to be acquired from the gratuitous favour of another. Nevertheless, as ripening years gave me a *pretension*, though *not a right*, to manhood,

hood, my consciousness of independence had its full force ; and I paid my addresses to a young lady of family and fortune, notwithstanding every objection which was made against it at home, on account of my extreme youth ; and I got the better of every obstacle, and was a declared lover at the age of seventeen. Replete as such a step was with hazard and danger, I *chanced* to have made an excellent choice. The family connection was perfectly desirable and respectable, and the object of my affection most amiable and worthy in every instance ; and out of much apparent evil the greatest good redounded to my future life from this association.

CHAP. XXI.

Mr. Oliver's Narrative continued.

NEARLY about the time of my coming of age, I was married to my beloved friend; and this union, which Heaven permitted to last for seven years, I can truly say, produced me such an accumulation of felicity, as seldom falls to the lot of one man's span of existence. It seems as if the quantum of happiness, which was intended to

have been diffused over my whole life, had been accidentally concentrated to that small portion of it.

" My amiable wife added to my domestic comfort a boy and a girl; but nearly from the time of the birth of the girl, she declined so perceptibly in her health, that the three remaining years of her life may be properly said to have been years of pain, sickness, and infirmity. They were also years of the most heroic patience and resignation under these visitations, which so often sour the minds of persons in much more advanced life, and with apparently much greater mental powers of resistance. The victory was, however, destined to fall to the share of the Universal Conqueror; and notwithstanding all that art, skill, and attention could labour in her behalf, with the concurrence of her own perfect conformity to every direction and application, how painful and troublesome soever it might

might be ; notwithstanding every thing that could be done, she resigned her innocent and inoffensive life, in the twenty-seventh year of her age ; and it may be truly affirmed of her, that *she felt no other wound than that which she left behind !*

" I may venture to say, divested of every partiality, that her manner of sustaining the attacks of illness, and the final approaches of death, furnished a lesson of the highest importance, and the rarest occurrence to those who were favoured with an opportunity of witnessing and profitting by it. To myself it was *like a revelation from heaven !* And when I inscribed upon her tomb-stone, among other lines, the following concluding sentence—

" Reader ! if thou wouldest wish
" To live as peaceably, and die as quietly,
" And full of hope, as she did,
" Thou must endeavour, like her,
" To be a Christian in thought, and word, and deed ! "

I felt

I felt that I was recording an unflattered truth, which was due to her memory, for the benefit of those who might come after.

" I have been thus particular in describing the loss which I experienced in her death; because that to the shock I then sustained, I attribute every irregularity which arose in my shattered system for many, many succeeding years! Still, however, I had the consolation of two children, the amiable offspring of the best of mothers.— Of these, however, the little girl, who had wound herself round my heart by ties which clung but too fast, in less than three months followed her mother to a world of bliss, and left me to conduct her brother and myself through a world of misery and error! Such, indeed, have I found it since!

" My mind, confounded, stunned, and convulsed by this double blow, appears to me, at the present period, to have been then

then thrown completely off its balance.— After a time, I persuaded myself that I had, in some measure, recovered the shock.— Company, and a studious renunciation of thought and painful recollection, seemed to have produced an opiate effect upon my sensibilities. In an evil hour, eleven months after the death of my angel wife, I was surprised into a second marriage, after a rapid courtship, during which *I dreamed that I was in love, and was about to be as happy as in my former union.* Those, however, who sleep, must, sooner or later, awake from their slumbers.—*I, indeed, awoke to the most dreadful convictions!*—I found that I had undertaken new obligations, and made new vows to love a second wife; but *my heart was in the grave with my first wife!* I was self-accused and self-convicted of injuring the lady who had received my vows, but it was wholly out of my power to fulfil them. *Love is an unbidden guest, whom no solicitations, no blandishments,*

(and

(and much less any violence, or any reproaches) can entice to enter into the regions of the heart.

" It is possible, however, that though the passion cannot be courted to take up its actual abode, it may be supplied by a real *esteem*, which may produce as much happiness to a *reasonable* being, even in wedlock, as the quality it is intended to represent. This esteem may undoubtedly be *acquired*, and, by proper conduct, will maintain a permanent footing in the mind; and, if I can venture to answer for myself on so delicate a point, I think I can assert, that the person in question might have obtained this hold upon me, though *I greatly fear that it was impossible for her to have gained any other*. Alas! she was not wise enough to make this sacrifice for our mutual comfort; nor could I so far depend upon the strength of her intellect, as to inform her of the truth of the case. Instead

stead of that, I was internally struggling against a fatal inaptitude of a softer affection for her, and the stinging sense of my obligations as a husband; and, I believe, that, to a certain degree, my mental powers were impaired and baffled in the conflict.—From this cause my resistance grew gradually weaker; and indifference, aggravated by reproach, misrepresentation, and misinterpretation of my principles and conduct, degenerated into aversion:—ill-judging, or ill-designing friends, and secret enemies, conspired to make every thing worse.

“ I changed my climate, accompanied by my family—but, “ *Cælum, non animum mutant, qui trans mare currunt.*”—I carried my source of unhappiness with me, and fatally kept my secret to myself! The wound rankled within me for want of proper vent, and its effects were proportionably disastrous. Blessed as I was with one of the best of children, in my son, whose education I had

superintended from his birth, I found some comfort in this occupation; but it was counterbalanced by the society of a companion *whom I could not love, though I anxiously wished for it.* She was convinced of the first fact, but she had not penetration enough to discover the second. A long time passed before I infringed the rules of decorum; but at length the tide of perverted nature broke loose, destroyed every mound and obstacle, and spread ruin and desolation far and wide!

CHAP. XXII.

Mr. Oliver in Continuation.

“ FROM a state of peaceful retirement, I made my first desperate sally to London—detested scene of temptation, dupery, and extravagance to the unguarded and inexperienced individual—the vortex in which thousands are ingulphed, to their hopeless destruction.—There, at an age when the generality lay aside their follies, and grow wise by acquired experience, I launched out on the

the tempestuous ocean I ought to have been finally escaped from.

" By the most unaccountable fate, for want of attachment to *one* woman, I fell into the snares, and became the dupe of *many* women, and those of the basest and most mercenary kind. To them I sacrificed my fortune, my health, and my reputation, without gaining one faithful adherent from the multitude, whom I essayed with every inducement which *attentions, services, and enormous expences* (to relieve their distresses, minister to their necessities, and gratify their luxurious passions) could summon to my aid.— All, however, was vain, ineffectual, and ruin to myself. All my pecuniary resources were exhausted; my real friends deserted me; false pretenders to friendship crowded about me, professing much, but doing nothing, or worse than nothing. A general idea prevailed that my intellect was irretrievably injured; I was left to my fate; to

the perplexities of distress, the gnawings of self-reproach, the persecutions of mankind, their resentments, and revenge ; and, finally, my career was ended in the King's Bench and Fleet prisons.

“ Here a new world opened upon me ; *a microcosm, compounded of good and evil, but much more of the latter* ; and I, as usual, from an ardour of disposition, *which, perhaps, I derive from the torrid zone under which I was born*, entered into it with a degree of enthusiasm to which I look back with horror and admiration.

“ If we pause here for a little interval, we shall find that the first moments of imprisonment are, in fact, moments of peace, compared with those which precede, when the persecutions of creditors, and the pursuit of arrests, drive the unfortunate sufferer to the most dreadful straits of agitation and distress ; not to say that the *experience of* any

any evil is always more tolerable than the apprehension of it. Hence it is that the new prisoner, upon first entering the gloomy domain of which he becomes an inhabitant, feels himself under the influence of a flow of unnatural spirits, from the state of tranquillity in which he is left from *external attack*; and being, most probably, provided in some measure against immediate want by temporary resources of his own, or by the assistance of friends, (who do not desert him in the beginning of his troubles, *although they are sure to do it afterwards*) he acts with a prodigality and thoughtlessness which are intolerable in such a crisis as that which he has encountered: he is quickly too besieged by older inhabitants, whom distress has taught to consider a good meal and a bottle of wine to be substantial blessings; and to them he is lavish of bounties of this kind, which habit has induced him to believe as coming of course, and never to be wanted. His means are soon exhausted; his friends

without are sure to gain intelligence of his conduct from some busy tongue or pen ; he solicits their assistance, which they now withhold ; he repeats letter after letter, sometimes rising into invective, or humbled into the lowest supplication, *but all to no purpose !* He now grows desperate ; neglects himself ; becomes indifferent of his *conduct* no less than of his *appearance* ; and too often winds up his story with habitual intoxication or gloomy melancholy, whose hope is the silence and oblivion of the grave.

“ I describe all these gradations of misery from the experience I have had of every one of them, during an imprisonment of years, wherein *I have drunk deep of the poisoned cup of sorrow, and sucked out the last drop from the dregs which settled at its bottom !* Perhaps I am the most singular instance of the evils of imprisonment of any unfortunate wretch who has sustained them. I have been the dupe of the greatest villains

lains who infest the lower and middling ranks of society ; and I have experienced the neglect and misinterpretation of friends, to a degree which has scarcely ever been paralleled. The very letters which I have written to describe to my friends my sense of the errors I had committed, to deprecate their resentment, and implore their benevolence, commiseration, and charity, have been interpreted as proofs of a perverted mind ; and at the moment when I have been as sound as at the instant of inditing this narrative, the individuals who refused me their bounty, have industriously propagated, and affected to believe, that *I was a madman, for whom a prison was a merciful allotment, and a bare subsistence the utmost which should be allowed.*

“ All this I have sustained ; and have been even conscious of the lot which I was destined to bear, at the very moment that I was sinking under its pressure. How I have

H 3 survived

survived the complicated agonies I endured at that astonishing moment, I cannot tell. I can only attribute this almost miraculous power of resistance to that God of strength, who has magnified himself in my weakness, and who has proved to me, beyond the possibility of doubt and distrust, that " he never faileth them that seek him."

CHAP. XXIII.

Mr. Oliver in continuation.

" I HAVE often wondered within myself, during my own captivity, what reasons of state could ever have occasioned that flagrant infringement of *Magna Charta*, which has been committed by the authorising of *imprisonment for debt*. If it be supposed to assist the interests of commerce, the hypothesis is founded upon false principles. In-

H 4 discriminate

discriminate and ready credit does more harm than good in a community.—This is undoubtedly much increased by the facility of *arrests on mesne process*; and what is the consequence? Immense expences are attached to the original debt by iniquitous lawyers; the creditor is often harassed to advance them; and the debtor rendered by confinement totally unable to pay, not only them, but the first demand. When resentment abates, and revenge is gratified, a compromise takes place, and the *creditor* becomes a *considerable pecuniary sufferer*; and the *debtor*, being completely thrown out of former connections of business or interest in various ways, *is totally ruined*. On the contrary, were arrests only permitted *in execution*, credit would, of course, be diminished; but the tradesmen would lose less money, and the prisons be more thinly inhabited—circumstances which no good citizen or feeling man could regret.

" If

" If imprisonment be considered in another point of view, namely, as a punishment for misconduct and extravagance, let it then have a fixed term, and do not lock up a debtor for life, and release a criminal when the time of his sentence is expired. It is incredible to conceive what injury is also done to the moral state of the prisoner by confinement. Men frequently appear to have left all their principles and manners without the prison-gate, and it is much to be feared that they do not resume them on going out of it; and it is an incontestible truth, that nothing renders men so disaffected to Government as the coercion of imprisonment. In fact, there is hardly any one who has endured the chicane of the law, in his own person as an imprisoned debtor, but must detest the Government which exposes him to it. What, for instance, can be more outrageously cruel, than to put it in the power of a real or fictitious creditor to remove by *babeas* from one prison to another,

merely in order to harass an unfortunate being, and deprive him of the wretched privileges which he derives from his seniority of denizenship in those communities of sorrow !

“ Surely a time must come when regulation in these and similar circumstances will take place, by some means or other ; and how little reason have we to look for a promptitude in alleviating the distresses of the afflicted ; as if it was not enough to lock a man up in *one* place, and suffer him to settle himself in the poor comfort which he can derive from being entitled to a vaulted cell in a dungeon, but you must allow a merciless fellow-creature, who professes to have lent him *ten pounds*, to drag him to *another* prison, where he is to recommence a painful and most expensive routine, in which he is gradually to obtain an establishment, which a third person may interrupt again, and so on, to the end of his captivity.

“ My

" My friends will, I trust, pardon me for obtruding these thoughts upon them at this time ; but they made such an impression upon my mind when I felt these severe inconveniences in my own case, that they unavoidably force themselves forward when I am brought, by my narrative, to the period of calamity which gave them birth.

" Perhaps it may be now time to recur to myself, in order that I may the sooner complete the work which I have undertaken.

" I remained a prisoner for some years, with hardly a hope of ever tasting again the sweets of liberty ; *those sweets which we never know how to enjoy until we have once been deprived of them !* At length a friend, whom I had not seen for a long time, called upon me ; and having rendered me a small pecuniary service, he took up the idea that he might benefit me by the donation

of a lottery-ticket, which unexpectedly came up a prize of *one thousand pounds!* With part of this sum, which he judiciously applied, he compromised my debts on very easy terms, my circumstances being considered as desperate. With the remainder I purchased a small annuity, and with that contracted pittance I retired to this place; where, had I been less fortunate than the society in which I at present am has made me, I should have lived in profound obscurity and oblivion, and my errors and misfortunes would have been buried with me beneath the sod which covered my rustic grave.

" Since, however, it has pleased a good and gracious Providence to take me from the seclusion of the cottage to the hospitality of Selby-House, I could not withhold a confidence so justly due to its bountiful and generous owner.

" Much

" Much have I omitted, or slightly passed over ; but, I trust, that I have disclosed enough to convince my friends that I have been more weak than guilty ; and that the candid declaration of my errors herein made, entitle me to the credit of being supposed to have renounced from principle that conduct which I have so freely blamed.

" I feel the absurdity of brooding over sorrows for events which cannot now be recalled, nor do I ever intentionally indulge the melancholy consequent on their bitter remembrances. For my own sake I would wish to avoid such a painful recurrence ; for the sake of such beloved friends I should be equally anxious to renounce it altogether ; but the invader is sometimes too strong for me :—he binds me in the fetters of excessive sensibility, and it is in vain for me to attempt to resist. I am forced to yield to his temporary visitations, and gradually to steal from his influence by every artful means I can devise.

" Thus

" Thus do I linger through life, looking forward to that period which must, sooner or later, arrive, wherein "the wicked cease from troubling, and wherein the weary are at rest."

CHAP. XXIV.

The Reader's Attention still directed to Mr. Oliver.

AFTER all that our readers have heard concerning Mr. Selby, there cannot be a doubt that he read the preceding narrative of Mr. Oliver with the moist poignant sentiments of sympathy and commiseration.

He observed that his friend had spoken very slightly of many parts of his history,
par-

particularly respecting his wife and son, whether they were yet living or not; and he concluded that he would be pained by any questions being asked him on the subject; and he remarked that he studiously avoided the naming of any individuals, whereby any blame should be appropriated to them, while he was extremely liberal in marking all his own faults and errors with a precision hardly to be expected from the mistaken person himself.

His observations on the miseries and cruelties of imprisonment, he could not but allow to be very just; and he grieved, when he recollect ed that they were the result of the long and painful experience gained by Mr. Oliver himself in the very scene which he described. But what touched him the most sensibly was the intimations given by Mr. Oliver, in the course of his narrative, of the cruel charge laid against him of being under the

con-

continued influence of insanity, whilst struggling in thraldom, under the wretched consequences of his imprudence. He considered that attacks of that kind were, of all others, not to be parried by any means in the power of the accused ; and he felt, to the centre of his sensibility, the unmanly advantage which had been taken of him by his accusers when immured in a dungeon, neglected and forsaken by his friends, they availed themselves of his forlorn state of dereliction, to propagate calumnies which none could contradict, and which he himself, in whatever way he encountered them, by the vilest perversions of his meaning, was made to confirm.

It was his just and pointed remark on the subject, that his enemies had seemed to adopt the best methods they could devise to realize the dreadful state which their malice depicted without foundation ; and he felt himself inclined to believe that *that* was

was the secret hope and the covered intention which induced them to persist in their conduct, in order that some subsequent irregularities might be taken as specimens of a *system* of derangement, and the unfortunate individual be consigned to neglect and oblivion, as irretrievably lost to society and his friends. And now that Mr. Oliver's relation had disclosed this direful suspicion by which he had been so rigorously viewed, and hardly judged, he was able to account for that habitual restraint under which he seemed continually to act, lest at any time his sorrows might be so laid asleep, as that vivacity and cheerfulness might be returned to his countenance and actions, and be perverted and misrepresented to his disadvantage now, as it had been to his ruin before. Hence, therefore, he could attribute the deep melancholy and gloom which overshadowed him, as worn almost by choice, in order to shelter him from attacks which had

had nearly overwhelmed him in the lowest depths of despair.

The result of all these reflections crowding on Mr. Selby's mind, interested him to a degree which seemed to engross all his faculties. He redoubled his affectionate attentions to his friend; and, imparting his benevolent ideas to Mr. Falcon and to the two ladies, he proposed that they should all jointly concur in labouring to restore Mr. Oliver's mind to a state of tranquillity and ease, which, in his present most happy situation, was not likely to be interrupted by any of these baleful causes, which had been so long undermining them. And the reader will surely concur with us in considering such an undertaking as most highly worthy of the good and amiable persons, who were enlisted under the banners of the most disinterested and sincerest charity and benevolence to promote it.

Flagrant

Flagrant as had been Mr. Oliver's deviations from rectitude, he had paid, at least, as heavy penalties in his sufferings to counterbalance and atone for them ; and if self-conviction and actual reformation could be of any value to redeem the errors of a misspent life, he did not deserve to be cast away as reprobate and incorrigible.

How much is it to be lamented that the *spirit of love*, which is the true spirit of christianity, should so little predominate in the hearts of its professors ! How dreadful is it to think that *that* Saviour, who died for his *enemies*, should not be permitted to leave an example to be followed by his *friends* ; and that his precept of "loving one another as he had loved them," should be received without effect, and be contradicted by practices of a nature the most different and opposite ; *as if man was formed to be the foe of man, and as if God had revealed himself, not as the protector,* but

but destroyer of his creatures; not as their Parent and Redeemer, but their tyrant and oppressor; not as having made them for the beatitudes of heaven, but as having doomed them to the miseries of hell!

CHAP.

CHAP. XXV.

The same Subject still pursued.

MR. Oliver having thus revealed himself to persons so unanimously disposed to serve him in every respect, as well in essential points as in those which had a reference even to his mental comfort and gratification, we cannot believe otherwise than that he was materially benefited by their continual exertions in his behalf.— In fact, we are framed with so singular

an aptitude to receive with pleasure all the kind offices of society, that although our situation of distress may actually be irremediable, yet it is a matter of satisfaction to the mind to know that its sorrows are commiserated by beings who can only breathe over them the sigh of unavailing sympathy.

Hence it was that Mr. Oliver found a real consolation, in knowing that his friends of Selby-House were sincerely interested in his misfortunes ; and though it was impossible for them wholly to destroy the cruel remembrance from his own mind of all that he suffered, yet it became a much more tolerable companion to his thoughts, while he felt that they were privy to it, and were not insensible of the severity of his fate.

The gentlemen, too, (Mr. Selby and Mr. Falcon) knowing his idolatrous attachment

tachment to literary pursuits, and deep researches after knowledge, were studious to improve every opportunity of indulging his passions, and absorbing painful reflections in its dominion and influence. Not an incident occurred but they sought for some new method of stealing him, as it were, from himself, and leading the way to some department of science, which, in almost every one, was either familiar, or, at least, no stranger to his acquirements.

Thus Mrs. Selby having remarked, in the green-house, that a geranium which stood near the glass, and exhibited those of its leaves and branches, which were *nearest* to the glass, in an angular direction, while those which lay behind, and most remote from the glass, pressed forward to it, in a horizontal direction, (in which only they could have reached it) enquired, with some anxiety of curiosity, what could be the cause of this diversity of growth?

Mr. Falcon immediately observed to her, that it was from the attachment of plants to the *light*, that the one, in question, sought it by a species of vegetating instinct.

"There is a necessity," said he, directing the subject to the studious Mr. Oliver, "for the co-operation of the *natural trinity* of *fire*, *light*, and *air*, in order to the well-being of all nature and creatures; and there is," said he, "a *trinity in unity* existing conjointly in the *sun* (the great representative of the God-head), inasmuch as he is the parent of heat, and light, and the rarifier and producer of *air* and *wind*."

"Your idea," said Mr. Oliver, eagerly taking up the discourse, "suggests to me that there are expressions in Holy Writ which authorize us to suppose, that it was the *intention* of God Almighty that we

should reconcile our finite capacities to the *Divine Trinity in Unity* by that symbol; for thus," said he, " we find that God the *Father* is called " *a consuming fire*;" God the *Son* is said to be " *the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*;" and God the *Holy Ghost*, in being called " *the Divine Spirit*," (or the Hebrew *Ruah*, and the Greek *Pneuma*, which both signify *breath* and *wind*, as well as *spirit*) answer to the *third* in the *natural trinity*, namely, *the air*."

" I perceive," said Mr. Selby, smiling, " that you, as well as myself, have been a reader and favourer of the writings of the German *Theosophist*, *Jacob Bebbmen*. And surely," continued he, " nothing could be so singularly proper, as that our blessed *Saviour* and *Redeemer* should be symbolized by the *light*, which is, of all things, the most delightful and grateful to human nature. Among the eastern nations it was always the figu-

rative type of joy, happiness, and deliverance; gloom and darkness were, on the contrary, the symbols of sorrow and affliction; and the spirit of darkness intended that enemy of mankind, who is directly opposed to the *Divine Philanthropist*, the benevolent Jesus, or the Saviour."

"Taking up your idea," said Mr. Falcon, "though on inferior grounds, (for which I must crave your pardon, as I bring you down to a less sublime subject) I think I can assign to you a forcible reason why men have concurred in fixing such an extraordinary value on the diamond; because that it reflects light in its greatest resplendence, and sparkles with a glory which is almost heavenly."

"I feel," said Mrs. Selby, "that my geranium has been very highly honoured, in having given birth to a conversation of so wide and interesting a scope."

"Nothing," replied Mr. Selby, "can be more proper than that we should be led from *earthly* to *heavenly* pursuits; and, if we will but bestow the pains which *the search after God* demands of every devout worshipper of him, "in spirit and in truth," we shall find him *every where!* "Jovis omnia plena," was the assertion of a heathen poet, and the *christian* must confess, with heartfelt conviction and delight, that "God is indeed all in all!"

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVI.

Our Friends still philosophising in Divinity.

OUR good-natured readers will pardon us for being such faithful biographers, as even to follow our triumvirate into the most recondite of their speculations. To some of them we trust that they may afford a degree of gratification. Others, however, there may be, who will feel no

taste for such subjects; but these persons we must entreat to pass over these occasional digressions, in the hope that they may find something to interest them in the general detail of the narrative.

Premising this apologetic observation, we are led to hint at one or two other topics which our friends were not a little fond of discussing.

Of these, one of them, to which Mr. Oliver was most peculiarly attached, was that of *universal salvation*, by which he meant, *the belief that every rational and accountable agent would, sooner or later, be saved*. He reprobated the idea that a *God of love* could ever doom *any* of his creatures to *everlasting punishment*; and he therefore conceived the punishment of another world (the reality of which is essential to the propriety of a moral government) to produce a *purifying* as well as a *penal*

penal effect; and, in process of time, (in proportion to the degree and inveteracy of guilt) to prepare and fit the suffering sinner to receive the divine mercy, which, we are told, is “*willing that all men should be saved; and cannot will without effecting its fiat.*”

“ I presume,” said Mr. Selby, “ that you are furnished with proper arguments against that declaration in the *New Testament*, “*that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.*”

“ I am convinced,” replied Mr. Oliver, “ that the Greek word *aiwvios*, which is rendered *everlasting*, being an immediate derivative from *aiwv*, an *age*, cannot mean an unlimited description of time, but a circumscribed, though a long and indefinite period.”

"The Old Testament suggests," said Mr. Falcon, "if I recollect right, no precise idea of eternity; and, I candidly confess, that I have been long a secret favourer of the persuasion of Origen, which Mr. Oliver has given us with powerful commendations of his own."

"What, too, do you think," said Mr. Oliver, "of the notion that our blessed Saviour died to *appease the wrath of God, and to make satisfaction to his offended justice?*"

"I think," said Mr. Selby, "that to attribute the passion of wrath to God Almighty, is to make him as imperfect as ourselves. The wrath and hatred are in the creature, who turns from his Creator, while he is eternally looking upon him with an eye of love, compassion, and long-suffering.

"What

"What appears to my narrow faculties," said Mr. Oliver, "to be the fact, is, that since in the day that man, by *living to the carnal life* of natural knowledge and appetites, imbibed with the fatal apple, *died to the divine life*, he could only live again to the latter by *dying to the former*.— Therefore it became necessary that a representative Redeemer (equal in power to his Creator) should enter into his nature, and die for him, in order that he should communicate his own divine nature, in the plenitude and energy of which the fallen man should rise to the excellence and privileges of that divine (spiritual) image, in which his paradisaical mind was originally created."

"On all these abstruse subjects," said Mr. Falcon, "there is a striking coincidence in our opinions; and it is a pleasing reflection, that these opinions all tend to bring our hearts and affections still

closer to our God ; to explain, in a certain degree, the mysteries of his revelation to us ; and to give us that " peace and joy in believing," which is the heaven of the christian mind in its progress through sorrow to everlasting felicity."

CHAP. XXVII.

Mr. Oliver still the Topic.

BIOGRAPHY is, with respect to history, what portrait painting is to historical. The biographer and the delineator of individual faces are obliged to descend to all the minutiae of similitude; and have no other merit than that of expressing the smallest feature and shade by which their respective *exemplaria* are distinguished.

On the other hand, the person who describes on paper, or on canvas, the fate and the transactions of nations, fixes on great and prominent circumstances to bring forward to observation, and sinks into obscurity those inferior points, which peculiarly belong to the confined scope of the other imitators of human nature.

In conformity with these general observations, since our task is to give the reader as correct an account of Mr. Oliver as we can, we must frequently descend to particulars, which are only important as they exhibit him in the most characteristic forms and colours.

Agreeably to this professed obligation, we would remark, concerning him, that there was a certain degree of enthusiasm about him, which occasioned him, once embarked in a pursuit, to follow it with an ardour which, besides injuring himself, was

was too violent to be maintained with equal tenour for any length of time. Accordingly, from the means employed by his friends of diverting his mind from intense thought on subjects of painful retrospection on his past conduct, by engrossing him in scientific investigation, he insensibly adopted their scheme, with such a vivacity of co-operation, that they began to fear that it would exceed, in its effects, their benevolent intentions.

Being very deeply versed in the acquirement of languages, he was very great in the refinements of grammatical knowledge; and having laid down the plan of a *polyglot* grammar, wherein the principles of *universal grammar* being first established, the specific distinctions of each particular grammar were then explained, as they existed in opposition to those of other grammars;—he was led away with the idea of forming an *universal language*, to be used in common

common by all nations, as a general medium of intercourse, which should, as it were, restore the confusion of Babel, and assemble mankind again in a fraternal commerce of intelligible sounds.

The reader will easily perceive that the scheme was extremely arduous; though, were it possible to bring it to maturity, there could be no doubt of its important utility. Whether human genius could accomplish so great an undertaking, can only be determined by the result of the experiment. In the present instance we can only vouch for its having been tried by our hero, whose abilities were equal to many more than the *generality* of the literati, who are celebrated for natural and acquired knowledge.

How far he advanced in this mazy path of speculation, we cannot positively determine; we are certain, however, that
all:

all his faculties were absorbed in this favourite idea, and all his time engrossed in its cultivation. As he advanced farther into its minutiae, innumerable difficulties grew up around him ; and he began reluctantly to feel that the possibility of reducing it to practice, was very obscure and uncertain. After the pains which he had taken, it was no little mortification to him to discover that the tower he was raising, like that ancient one in the plains of *Sbinar*, must be left unfinished ; and that he should not be able ("to make of the people one, to have all one language,") but that they must remain, as then, confounded in language, and not capable of understanding "one another's speech."

To those who have ever been devoted to the enthusiasm of scientific researches, the disappointment of Mr. Oliver may be easily conceived; others, who have only skimmed the surface of literature, or have not

not been at all conversant in it, must take our words that it was extreme. His spirits, which, from the comforts of the society in which he was now *engrafted*, and from the hope of success in the scheme he so greatly idolized, had risen to a standard of comfort both to himself and his friends, now sunk to their former abyss of despondence. A gloomy silence took place ; and they greatly feared that the issue would be disastrous to himself, and extremely painful to those feelings of sympathy, which had been so powerfully excited in his behalf.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVIII.

The same Subject continued.

THE happiness of the family at Selby-House knew no alloy at this juncture but the disquietudes of their unfortunate friend and inmate, Mr. Oliver.

Mrs. Falcon began now to excite very lively hopes in the bosom of her fond and faithful partner, that he should, in due time, behold himself represented in the person
of

of a stranger, who would be introduced to him with unanswerable and indefinable claims to all the tenderness of his susceptible and affectionate heart.

The joy, which the prospect of such an event produced, was universal, nor could it be diminished by any circumstance so pregnant with regret, as the evident proofs which they every day received with increasing evidence, that the lowness of spirits, with which Mr. Oliver was irrecoverably oppressed, was a sad presage and prognostic of declining health. The symptoms were, at first, obscure, and seemed to lie so immediately on the confines of the corporeal and mental system, that it was hardly possible to know to which to attribute them; and in what way to attempt the cure or the alleviation of a disease, whose source and whose seat seemed to lie beyond the reach of human penetration.

We

We will not pretend to describe the anxious solicitude of Mr. Selby, on viewing the ravages which were continually made on the peace and health of his beloved friend. It was impossible for him to conceal it long; and while he most pathetically expressed to him his sorrow on the occasion, he begged and entreated him to permit him to seek for the best advice in the medical line, in the hope that he might soon be restored to the tranquillity and strength which he had enjoyed in the earlier days of their intimacy.

" You are become, my dear friend," said he, " so necessary and so essential to my own comfort and well-being, that, for my own sake, I must insist upon every means being employed for your speedy and complete restoration. Who, alas!" continued he, " could supply your place on these confidential occasions, when the heart unfolds itself, and ventures, without

out fear of treachery or misapprehension,
to think aloud! Near as we are to each
other in point of age, and associated by
similar pursuits in the most abstruse and
least-beaten paths of science, (whose shades
are deepened and rendered sacred by be-
ing little frequented by the *profane vul-
gar*) such an associate is not easily to be
found, when it is my misfortune to lose
you!"

"There is nothing," my dear Sir," said Mr. Oliver, "which I would not cheerfully do to oblige you. If, therefore, the calling in of a physician will communicate the smallest satisfaction to you, it is entirely impossible that I should object to it; but I apprise you beforehand, that the utmost elaborations of hu-
man skill can be of no avail to *my* relief;
the accumulated distresses of my life have
laid the foundation of its abridgment.—
My late pursuits have been too intense for
my

my nervous powers; and my disappointment in the attainment of its end, too severe for their resistance. The microcosm of my system approaches to its dissolution; and every day makes such perceptible alterations in my own sensations of continuance in life, that I know I am a guest, whose abidance will be very short on this side eternity; and whenever my summons is given, believe me," said he, "that I shall receive it—
" *Uti conviva satur!*" a weary traveller, who, from a long, perilous, and disastrous journey, is welcomed to a home, after which he has been languishing in pain and sorrow."

CHAP. XXIX.

Transactions at Selby-House, in Continuation.

MR. Selby having obtained this ready compliance with his request from his declining friend, was not long before he proceeded to put it in execution, by sending or his tried and highly-valued physician, Dr. M_____.

Before

Before he introduced him to his patient, he took care to give him a feeling sketch of his history and misfortunes, in which was interwoven the complicated and concealed disease which he had to search out, and, if possible, to remedy.

The Doctor listened with great attention to the narrative of woe, most pathetically detailed by Mr. Selby, and, when it was brought to a conclusion, he remained for some time silent; but at length, he observed, that such a deeply-sown disorder, in so irritable a subject, promised but little success to the best endeavours of medical skill.

"Who," said he,

"Can minister to a mind diseased?

Who can restore the quiet of a *broken spirit*? If, however, it may be in my power to palliate evils, which I wholly despair of removing

removing entirely, I will exert it to the utmost; but I attempt the work with diffidence and apprehension of the consequence."

Being soon after introduced to Mr. Oliver, he found, with extreme concern, that a slow nervous fever had made very considerable progress, and was very quickly advancing its attacks, and would, ere long, make its approaches to the last citadel of life with complete success.

He had a long and very interesting conversation with his patient, who, being long a zealous and partial student of the Swiss physiognomist, easily read, in the lines of his physician's countenance, the strong impressions of a man of equal feeling and ability.

Mr. Oliver explained himself in a variety of important instances to Dr. M.'s fullest satisfaction,

satisfaction in point of information; but though his senses were perfectly unimpaired, and his mind wholly composed, the Doctor was thoroughly persuaded that his case was an hopeless one; and that, though his death might not be immediate, it was inevitable, in consequence of the mass of dreadful disease which was heaped upon his constitution.

It is not to be supposed that Mr. Oliver failed to question the Doctor upon his opinion concerning his situation; nor can we imagine that the Doctor hesitated candidly to give it to him in all the trying particulars of his friendly and too-judicious apprehensions. It can hardly be necessary to add, that he received them, not with stoical insensibility, but with the truest christian resignation and patient acquiescence.

He broke out into a momentary apof-
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trophe on the intimation that, ere long, his last enemy would make his final and fatal attack, and that his death would be the consequence :—

“ Inveni portum ; Spes et Fortuna, valete !

“ Sat me lusistis ; ludite nunc alios !”

“ And when, my dear Sir,” continued he, “ will my shattered, weather-beaten, shipwrecked bark, enter that long wished-for harbour ?”

“ That question,” said Dr. M——, “ it is out of *my* power to resolve. It is impossible to tell how far the *vis vitæ* is exhausted, although it is very evident that it has received extraordinary shocks, and must be greatly impaired. Your own sensations will, however, before long, too correctly determine your doubts without my conjectural information. Would to God,” added he, “ that my fears may be groundless,

groundless, and that the powerful remedies I am applying, may work those miracles, on which I cannot dare to build any thing like dependance ! A little time will convince me whether they will have any efficacy ; and your own internal feelings, as I before suggested, will infallibly dictate the truth to your intrinsic sensibility."

" The will of God," said Mr. Oliver, " be done in this, as well as in every other instance ! Had I not been persuaded of the reality of another life, and of all the wonderful truths, and unspeakable hopes connected with it, I should long ago have quitted my station by some voluntary act of my own ; but *I firmly believed, and therefore I have suffered patiently !* Judge, then, whether if my Creator, my Redeemer, and my Sanctifier call me to their *triune* mercies, I do not obey their omnipotent behest with cheerful, nay eager acquies-

cence!—*My night has been long, tedious, tempestuous, and gloomy, with a darkness worse than Egyptian; say, then, if it be possible that the morning can too soon break upon my aching, anxious sight?"*

CHAP.

CHAP. XXX.

The closing Scene of the Drama not far distant.

IT was no difficult matter for Mr. Selby to prevail on Dr. M——— to wait for a few days, at Selby-House, the issue of his friend's illness. For some little time his medicines, which were of the most powerful kind, produced a very surprising effect; but use diminished their salutary influence, while the disorder was gaining ground and strength on the ex-

hausted and shaken frame which it had attacked.

"The struggle cannot be long," said the Doctor to Mr. Selby, as he left the bed-side of his patient; "Nature is almost worn out; her powers begin to flag, and time must soon yield to eternity!"

The watchful eye of the dying Mr. Oliver beheld the change in the Doctor's countenance, as he in a low tone pronounced these words to Mr. Selby, in a remote corner of his bed-chamber.

"Speak your sentiments aloud, my dear friend," said he; "you know that you will not alarm me, and surely I should be the first to know the time when my change is to come. Why should I fear, though I am destined to pass through the valley of the shadow of death? Will not that rod and that staff support me, which

which have upheld me as I tottered through the mazy journey of life? Does not the same merciful God preside, protect, and comfort, in the regions of *eternity*, as in the precincts of *time*? That I have some pangs at quitting life, I cannot deny. I have friends around me, who bind me rather too fast to the scene of my sorrows and *I have a son, beloved offspring of a beloved mother*, whom I shall, ere long, meet beyond the grave!—But these I will learn to quit; but it is *the last lesson I shall be capable of learning!*—*Though envy, hatred, and calumny have been my lot through life, love has ever been the essence of my constitution!*—Nor, with all my past sufferings, and all my future hopes, can I say *farewell* to those I love, without shedding some natural tears, the involuntary dew of expiring humanity!"

The length of this speech, as well as its subject, was too much for his feeble condition;

condition; and as the last words, *expiring humanity*, quivered upon his lips, he so entirely fainted away, that his friends were greatly apprehensive that they were the last which they should ever hear him utter:

The Doctor, however, perceived that his pulsation was still remaining, though it was extremely languid, and frequently remitted. Cordials were therefore, by his direction, carefully and cautiously administered. The flitting breath was arrested in its exit, and poor Mr. Oliver, after some interval, was recalled to a temporary and languishing existence. With life his resolution returned; his heart once more glowed with the truest affection for his friends; he pressed the hand of each with all the little strength he could assemble, and, at length, he was enabled to express to them his sense of their unremitting endeavours in his behalf.

Another

Another day was added to the span of his life, during which he expressed to Mr. Falcon his full and unreserved belief of all the great and consolatory truths of revelation; none of which, he declared, that he considered as possible to be discredited with safety, or to be duly believed, unless it produced a practical effect upon the heart and conduct, according to its peculiar nature and tendency.

He requested to receive the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as the great seal of the christian covenant, *the spiritual food and nourishment of that inward man, which was newly born into the heavenly kingdom in baptism;* and having partaken of that blissful communion, and solemnly bade adieu to his friends, and commended his best affections to his son, should they ever be introduced to his knowledge, he gently closed his eyes, and resigned his breath, with no other disquietude than the *animal*

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spasm of agonized nature, in that amazing moment when the long and close connection between *soul* and *body* is destined to be broken, or rather suspended till their final re-union in the indissoluble association of a glorious resurrection !

CHAP. XXXI.

The Conclusion.

AFTER having closed the scene of our hero's life, the reader may possibly conceive that little more can be added to what has been already detailed. It is, however, perhaps a justice due to the surviving friends, who had waited on his hours of sorrow, pain, sickness, and death, to say that they lamented the event which had separated him from them with a sincerity

sincerity of grief and regret which was adequate to his worth. They lamented it, not upon *his* account, for whom "to die was gain," but upon their own, who had lost a friend not easily to be replaced during the sequel of their lives.

They did not, however, grieve as those who have no hope. It was the firm belief of Mr. Selby, that *although earthly connections must be greatly modified, changed, and wholly spiritualized in another world, they were not entirely extinguished and ended by death.* This persuasion, so consolatory at the moment when we are obliged to part with a valuable and beloved friend, he communicated to Mr. Falcon in those serious conversations which so naturally succeeded the decease of Mr. Oliver; and he found no difficulty in converting him to the belief of a doctrine so replete with comfort under the heaviest of afflictions—*that of the loss of friends in death.*

Nor

Nor was Mr. Selby unmindful of shewing every external mark of respect and regard for *this* friend, who had been just taken from him. A decent consistent funeral conducted him to the grave, and a neat and elegant tomb-stone recorded the name, character, and circumstances of the amiable inhabitant who occupied its narrow limits.

The following simple inscription, the rapid effusion of his sorrowing mind under the first influence of his grief, is still legible in the little church-yard, in the village of _____.

Beneath this humble stone,
Sleep the remains
Of
JACOB OLIVER,
Aged ——,
Who died ——,
And who, from a distant climate,

Entered,

Entered, a stranger,
Into this country,
Most unpropitious to *bim*!
To meet with various misfortunes,
Distresses, and persecutions,
The result of ignorance of the world;
And of a mind not always regulated,
To the degree which might have been expected,
From the excellence of his abilities,
The rectitude of his principles,
And the sincerity of his christian faith!

READER!

In scanning the faults of others,
Learn to judge favourably and charitably of them;
And remember, in the midst of thy censure,
That thou thyself
Art a *fallible man* as he was!

The reader of this narrative, it is hoped, will apply this address to himself; and when he wanders, in his imagination and memory, over the perplexed and curious scenes of Mr. Oliver's most disastrous life, we trust that he will be inclined to mingle pity with reproach, and commiseration with blame;

and should he be led to suppose them as merely derived from the source of an inventive imagination, we here venture to assure him, that *they are faithful delineations of matters of fact, which have come under our observation, been present to our experience, and, in too many instances, been the bitter portion which has been assigned to our endurance!*

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That thou thyself
Art a *fallible man* as he was !

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